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NOTES

THE GERMAN TREATY

Few major treaties can have been signed in such inauspicious circumstances or amidst such general reservations as the peace contract just concluded between the Occupying Powers and Western Germany. The Germans themselves would prefer to try every possibility—however unlikely—of reuniting their country before agreeing to a permanent schism, and a very considerable proportion of them, *mirabile dictu*, are genuinely opposed to remilitarisation. The allied bombers and re-indoctrination courses seem to have worked better than anyone thought at the time. The French, for their part, are terrified of a resurgent Germany, possessed of what could only be a national army once the first German was put back into uniform, whatever the theoretical safeguards.

The effect on the Russians has yet to be foreseen. They have every reason to be as frightened as the French of a resurgent Germany, and the pause before the ratification of the new Contract and the European Army Agreement may well see a diplomatic offensive on the part of the Soviet Union to forestall their full implementation. Russia might even be prepared to surrender Austria and to throw the East German Communists to the wolves rather than see Western Germany a full fighting partner of the West. The real question is whether German demands for the restoration of her eastern territories or the broad sweep of Soviet imperialism is the more likely cause of a shooting war. It is a question which the present arrangement with Germany has not answered.

THE UNITED STATES

Statesmen in the Western world must sometimes pause long enough for a side glance at the one factor beside which even the threat of Communist aggression momentarily palls, and which is probably the chief reason why the Red military axe fails to fall—the possibility of another American slump. The Marxists count on it with certainty as part of their scientific rigmarole. The Western countries fear it as the development which could shatter all the elaborate economic reconstruction and defence precautions of the post-war years.

There have been whispers of an American recession for some time. In fact the torrent of expansion remains steady, and American technical and commercial ingenuity has succeeded in meeting not only the fabulous demands of the defence budget but in increasing the output of consumer goods as well. The slight lull in demand which followed the hoarding operations after the outbreak of the Korean war has now eased, although the sellers' market has become a buyers' market and prices are becoming keener and more competitive. Nevertheless, the effect on the dollar gap in most Western trading countries is not beneficial. Raw material prices, in particular, are falling, as American manufacturers draw on stocks in expectation of a further fall, and a tighter economy will be reflected in a demand for further increases in the American tariff barrier. Even a change in the American administration cannot radically alter the situation for the next year or two. Before that time, closer economic integration within the Western world will have to be achieved if the political disaster of recession is to be avoided.

STRASBOURG

The Council of Europe has reached the last fork in its road. It must either devise means of becoming the *locus* of the various international control bodies and assemblies foreseen in such agreements as the Schuman Plan and the European Defence Treaty, or it will talk itself into unnoticed extinction. Its prestige and authority have suffered severely over the last eighteen months and the result of its two sessions this year will either make it or break it. The problems involved are extremely delicate. Its present constitution forbids it to discuss matters of defence, and it is difficult to see how it could take the affairs of the European Defence Community under its wing when its membership includes such

Cartoon

No, Chancellor, it is exactly twice your size *Stuttgarter Zeitung*

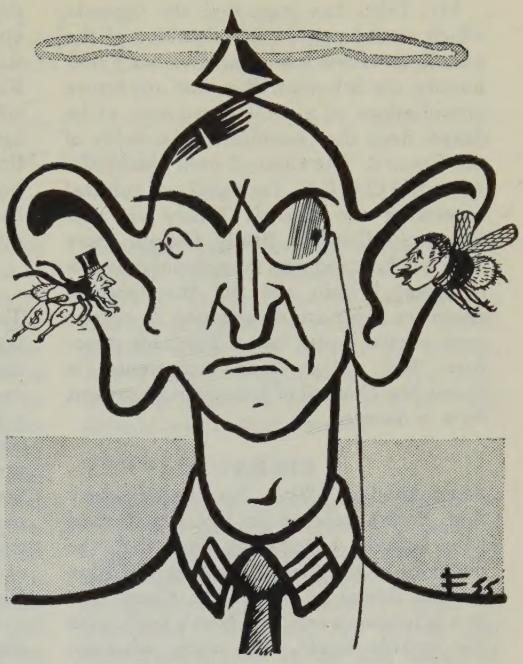
The European Army 'Say fatigues in German, parade in Italian and canteen in French' *Canard Enchaîné*

—Do you speak English? *Canard Enchaîné*

New words, but the same old tune *Elseviers Weekblad* (Holland)

'There are three things wrong with those miners—they're not English; they're Continentals; they're Italians' *Candido*

'What are you going to be when you grow up, little girl?' 'A Monarchy' *Candido*



Distractions *Die Nation* (Switzerland)

France's Marshall Plan *Die Weltwoche* (Switzerland)

countries as Sweden, pledged to preserve strict neutrality between East and West.

Mr. Eden has suggested the formula which would permit the members of the assemblies of the European Defence Community, the Schuman Plan, and any future organisations of a similar structure to be drawn from the Consultative Assembly of the Council. The Council itself would like to control O.E.E.C., the social and cultural aspects of the Brussels Treaty and the European Customs Study Group. Here they will be up against the perennial doubts of Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries, who are determined to oppose even partial lapses into a federalist structure. But unless some compromise is found, the Council of Europe in its present form is doomed.

CHINA

After Abadan, China. No one can deny that British mercantile interests abroad have suffered a crippling blow with the decisions of the firms operating in China to close down. As Mr. O. M. Green says in a subsequent article, China's trade with the outside world, her ports, wharves, warehouses and communication facilities have been built up almost exclusively by foreign capital, not by any means disinterested, but granting benefits and facilities without which the Chinese would still be operating a mediaeval economy. Now something like two hundred and fifty million pounds' worth of standing assets will have to be abandoned or sold for derisory prices to a government which has deliberately depreciated their market value. It is devoutly to be hoped that, during this winding-up period, which will take some time yet, no physical harm will come to the British representatives who have endured such an exasperating period in the hope of weathering the storm.

Many basic Chinese products, such as soya beans, bristles, tea and vegetable oil, have been trickling through to the export market via Prague, and some of the essential imports of machinery have been arriving from Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany. Such an exchange can in no way compete with the demands and economic necessity of a resurgent nationalist state. The Chinese Government has expressed its desire to trade with the rest of the world, on its own terms. Some of the ousted firms are considering banding themselves together and operating out of Hong Kong as trading associations dealing direct with Chinese Government purchasing agencies. This may be one way of ensuring that valuable ties of trade are not broken, but the old Hongs and all their traditions have gone for good, and very few people in this country seem to care.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Totalitarian States enjoy the initial advantage of offering a superficial picture of unity and efficiency calculated to give their more heterogeneous democratic opponents a feeling of inferiority when it comes to concerted action. One of the great imponderables in the Cold War, and one which tends to be overlooked in the comparison of forces, is the degree of stress and strain within the Soviet Empire. The writer of an article published recently in the Yugoslav *Review of International Affairs* gives a highly circumstantial account of the situation in Czechoslovakia, which certainly fits the motives for purge and counter-purge in that unhappy country more neatly into place than any other version. The author, Ivan Karaivanov, maintains that President Gottwald, an old Cominform regular, is under suspicion in Moscow of fostering Czech national interests. The Moscow confidant was Slansky, first Secretary-General of the Czech Communist Party and then Vice-President of the Republic. Slansky is said to have set up his own organisation within the Party and to have arranged for the arrest of Clementis, the former Foreign Minister, Sling, Madame Svermova and others, friends of Gottwald, whom he was powerless to protect. However, at the end of last year Gottwald counter-attacked and had Slansky removed from office, together with six thousand of his partisans over the course of the next few months. This emergence of Gottwald as a sort of under-cover Tito is highly illuminating, to say the least, and gives a very different substance to the endless satellite protestations of solidarity with the Soviet Union.

The Communists have persuaded themselves that Britain cannot exist without China's trade

The British in China

O. M. GREEN

THE enforced departure of the British from China brings to an end a period of just 110 years, dating from the Treaty of Nanking, in which British enterprise and administrative genius have never been surpassed. The energy of other nations is certainly not to be underrated; four or five of them formerly owned concessions in Tientsin and Hankow, and between the two World Wars Japanese competition became keen, with mills at Shanghai and Tsingtao and shipping on the Yangtze. But it was the British who inaugurated the period of Western influence in China and British merchants who founded Shanghai, devised its constitution and right down to the end dominated its administration.

It was by the wise forethought of Sir Rutherford Alcock, who during the T'aiping Rebellion was anxious that the Chinese Government should not lose the Customs revenue at Shanghai to which it was entitled, that the great service of the Imperial Maritime Customs was founded, which was built up by Sir Robert Hart to be the backbone of China's finances. Until the First World War, Britain's voice was the most powerful influence in international counsels on China.

If to the British property in Shanghai is added that in Tientsin, Hankow and Canton, in Ningpo, Foochow, Amoy and Swatow on the coast, in river ports on the Yangtze and West River, the capital value certainly is not less than £300,000,000 and may well add up to £400,000,000. It is extraordinary that this enormous loss (for which we may whistle for any compensation) should have been treated so lightly in England. When Mr. Eden announced to the House of Commons that the merchants could no longer fight against Communist oppression, the discussion occupied much less space than when some touchy Socialist raises a question of breach of privilege. For even more far-reaching than the loss of property is the blow to British prestige which will resound all through Asia. It marks a point at which our long-fumbling policy in China calls for clear thought and radical revision.

THE FACTORIES

The Portuguese arriving at Canton, in 1517, were the first Westerners of modern times in China. Their influence is still traceable in such 'pidgin' words as 'compradore' and 'mandarin', from the equivalent Portuguese for buying and commanding; and in the tiny colony of Macao at the mouth of the Pearl River which for nearly four centuries seems to have escaped the animosity both of Nationalists and (hitherto) of Communists. They were followed by Spaniards and Dutch. But Western trade with China did not show any real development until the arrival of the East India Company in 1734. It held a monopoly of the direct trade between China and Great Britain for just 100 years. But this was supplemented by the so-called Country trade conducted by British firms trading between China and India. Foremost among these was 'the princely hong', Jardine Matheson & Co., founded by that extraordinarily powerful personality, once a ship's doctor, William Jardine, who on occasion seems to have talked to the British Government like a headmaster to the fifth form. By 1834, growth of the Country trade and the rising competition of other countries showed that the East India Company's monopoly was clearly no longer practicable and it was abolished.

Anyone who can pick up on a second-hand bookstall a copy of *The Fan Kwae*[1] *at*

[1] Fan Kwae=foreign devils

Canton by an American businessman, in Canton early in the nineteenth century, named Hunter, will find in it a delightful account of the old 'factory'[1] days in Canton, their wealth, their relations with the Chinese and their manifold restrictions. The merchants were cooped up in a bit of ground by the river, about 400 yards long by 130 yards deep, from which they might not stir except for occasional, strictly-controlled exercise across the river. All business had to be conducted with a small ring of 'Hong' merchants who guaranteed the good behaviour of each foreigner and through whom alone communication with the officials of Canton, which they might never enter, was permitted. When the tea season closed in May, all the foreigners had to withdraw to Macao until October. And no wives were allowed in the factories, for the truly Chinese reason that wives would mean babies and, if once the foreigners started families (a word of peculiar sanctity in China), it would be impossible to deny them permanent residence. Yet within these limits factory life was well cushioned. Hunter gives a Lucullan account of dinner at the East India Company's factory; regattas, though technically forbidden, were held on the river and watched by the mandarins, who, says Hunter, seemed to regard the foreigners as unruly children and, in any squabble with Chinese, usually took their part.

SQUEEZE

But as business grew, the obstacles under which the foreigners laboured became less and less endurable—the increasing 'squeeze' demanded by the mandarins, the restriction and risk of dealing only with the hong merchants, who not infrequently went bankrupt through lack of capital. The British Government's efforts to better things encountered a blank wall. Lord Macartney, sent to Peking in 1783 to open diplomatic relations, was graciously received by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, but was sent home empty with a message to George III which is classic of sublime contemptuousness. Lord Amherst, sent on a similar errand in 1816, was still worse treated and left Peking within twenty-four hours without even seeing the Emperor. And all attempts by Lord Napier and Captain Elliot, successively sent to Canton as Superintendents of Trade after the ending of the East India Company's monopoly, were rudely rebuffed. It is hardly surprising that the British of those days, who had so recently stood alone against Napoleon and defeated him, should find such treatment unendurable.

THE TREATY OF NANKING

Details of the events leading to the war into which Britain and China drifted in 1839 are too long to be given, but once again one must protest against the implicit injustice of calling it the Opium War, and the obstinate inaccuracy of those even in England who say that it was fought 'to force opium on China.'

Opium was certainly a complicating factor, aggravated by the intemperance of Commissioner Lin, sent from Peking to stop the trade. It was causing a serious drain of silver from China and it was disliked by the Emperor, Tao Kwang, who was something of a moral reformer—though not by the southern mandarins who made money from it. But H. B. Morse, the American historian, shows in his monumental *International Relations of China*, that war sooner or later was bound to come. Sir Frederick Whyte, in *China and Foreign Powers*, says that 'Opium War' is as much a misnomer as the 'Serajevo War' would be for the First World War. Opium is never mentioned in the Treaty of Nanking of 1842 which ended the war. Sir Henry Pottinger, who signed it with the Chinese, warned the British merchants plainly that, if caught smuggling opium, they would have no protection from their Government. And a British schooner caught in Ningpo in 1854 with opium aboard promptly had her sailing papers confiscated by the British Consul.

Under the Treaty of Nanking, Hong Kong was ceded to Britain (and Lord Palmerston was vigorously questioned in Parliament as to what possible use could be made of such a barren fever-stricken rock); the germ of extraterritoriality, developed in full in the later American treaty, was incorporated; and Shanghai was opened to trade.[2] Even more than Hong Kong, which had the advantage of

[1] 'Factory' borrowed from India, a combined offices, warehouse and residence

[2] The Tientsin and Hankow Concessions date from 1860 after the Anglo-French War with China, memorable for the still much controverted burning of the exquisite Summer Palace

being British territory, Shanghai was to become the emblem and crown of British achievement in the Far East.

SHANGHAI

It could hardly have begun more unpromisingly. About a hundred British merchants, among them seven adventurous wives, went in 1843 to open trade. Living at first in the old Chinese city, they were as uncomfortable as leaking roofs and doors and lack of the simplest conveniences could make them. The mandarins, too, detested the presence of the barbarians and made no difficulty about granting them a strip of land along the Whangpoo (a tributary of the Yangtze) on which they were free to own land and govern themselves under their own laws.

That muddy strip—about a quarter of a mile long by 300 yards deep, later enlarged by agreement with the Chinese Government to a total of thirteen and a half square miles—became the beautiful Bund with lawns and gardens fronting one of the most majestic river fronts in the world. Here were the superb buildings of the Hong Kong and Shanghai and the Chartered Banks, of Jardine Matheson and Butterfield & Swire, the great shipping houses, the towering offices of the Customs and the *North China Daily News*, and of firms whose names go back for a century. Behind the Bund there grew up miles and miles of busy offices and residential houses and flats, shops which were stocked with almost anything the world produces, hotels and theatres, parks, playing fields, golf- and race-courses, clubs, hospitals, schools, an Anglican and a Roman Catholic Cathedral and four or five churches; and close-packed far down the river wharves, godowns and engineering works. On the eve of the Second World War the population of Shanghai numbered 60,000, representing thirty-six different nations besides one and a half million Chinese. Of the original British, French and American Concessions which came into existence soon after the British had opened the port, the British and American were amalgamated in 1863 into an International Settlement governed by an annually elected Municipal Council, while the French retained their own Concession. There was, however, no conspicuous geographical distinction between the two sections and they co-operated amicably.

Several features of Shanghai are noteworthy, which combined to make it unique in the world. No Chinese was obliged to sell his land to foreigners. Some, in fact, never did and remained on their property enjoying all the law and order and amenities of foreign rule, tax-free. The notion that this great city was stolen by the foreigners from China by force, as industriously propagated by the Nationalist agitators in later years, was wholly false.

EXTRATERRITORIALITY

In the second place extraterritoriality, on which Shanghai grew to be in effect an independent State, was not wrung from the Chinese by force, but was already in practice among some of China's subject tribes and was given to the first settlers in Shanghai to mark their inferiority: as one mandarin put it, 'they were not worthy to be governed by the great maxims of reason.' Later, of course, it became a grievance, especially in the break-down of ordered government in China after the Revolution of 1911. Shanghai was then the one place in a sea of anarchy where the rule of law prevailed, and the Municipal Council, with its huge mixed population and vast financial interests to guard, was obliged to use its extraterritorial powers to the full in order to fend off encroachments by warlords and politicians.

But, most peculiar feature of all, the International Settlement belonged to nobody but those to whom the land within its boundaries belonged. It was under the protection of sixteen Powers that had treaties with China, who all had equal legal rights in Shanghai, and each of whom had its own Court there in which cases concerning its nationals were tried. But they did not own Shanghai, and although the Municipal Council had to have its by-laws approved by the Diplomatic Body in Peking, the latter had no power to give the Council orders. Periodically the British Minister would descend from the Olympian heights of Legation Quarter in Peking, be entertained at dinner by the British Chamber of Commerce, converse with a few notables, and depart without, so

far as could be seen, the least difference to the even and efficient ways of the Council. Between 'Shanghai' and 'Peking' it must be confessed there was a great gulf fixed—geographically it was 600 miles wide. Each, seeing things entirely through its own spectacles, regarded the other as a nuisance.

Shanghai was undoubtedly a most happy and democratic community, an ideal League of Nations in miniature. The best men gave their services freely on the Municipal Council, often at much cost to themselves; every penny they spent was minutely set out, published in detail and annually submitted to the ratepayers for approval. The health, public works, fire and police services of this deservedly named 'Model Settlement' could not have been bettered. Alike in public enterprises and for defence in times of trouble, Shanghai stood together as one man. Famous in the annals of the city is the Battle of Muddy Flats in 1854, during the T'aiping Rebellion, when Chinese forces drew uncomfortably near the Settlement, and a tiny band of 380 British and Americans (mostly civilians with a few sailors) marched out and drove the intruders away. That was the beginning of an International Volunteer Force which grew to number 2,000 men, horse and foot, and guns, who again and again did admirable service with the regular police, in keeping order and defending Shanghai.

THE FALL OF SHANGHAI

The decline and fall of Shanghai began with the Second World War. A heavy blow was dealt by the British and American Governments by their new treaties with China in 1943: they had every right to surrender their extraterritoriality under these treaties, indeed nothing else could have happened in view of China's position as an Ally in the war. But they had no right whatever to include Shanghai in this surrender. As shown above, there were fourteen other Powers with equal legal rights in Shanghai equally entitled to be consulted as to its future; and Shanghai ought to have been excluded from the operation of the Anglo-American treaties and reserved for an international conference after the war. But the other Treaty Powers were too weak to assert their rights. It is an interesting thought that if, when Japan fell, Shanghai had been reoccupied by the Powers instead of being permitted through the really unpardonable act of London and Washington to fall into the Nationalists' lap, the history of the past six years might have been quite different. It is even possible that China would not now be Communist[1].

From the heavy blow of the British and American treaties following on the Japanese occupation, Shanghai never recovered. More than half of the British community were driven away between 1945–9 by the impossibility of doing business under the gross misgovernment and shameless corruption of the Kuomintang administration and the headlong collapse of the currency—when a 500 dollar note dropped in the street was hardly worth picking up. But there were still 4,000 British when the Communists marched in in May 1949. At first the Communists made a good impression: they were strict but even-handed, efficient, free from corruption, and their soldiers were extraordinarily well-behaved. Furthermore, Mao Tse-tung had published an explicit promise to the foreign merchants (just as he had done to those of Tientsin) that their rights and interests would be fully protected so long as they did not meddle in politics.

A CURIOUS PARALLEL

Disenchantment began with the discovery that, however much a merchant might be losing, he must still keep and pay his Chinese staff in full. During Chiang Kai-shek's air blockade of Shanghai, before the Americans stopped it by neutralising Formosa on the outbreak of war in Korea, British firms in England and Hongkong were forced to remit as much as £350,000 a month to their houses in Shanghai for this purpose. That drain is still going on. In each office the Chinese workers are formed into a union connected with a parent union outside. Not only do they make and enforce the most extravagant demands, but they are encouraged to interfere continually in the management and are under orders to report daily to the Communist authorities everything that the

[1] The meanness of the Nationalist Government almost passes belief. In spite of the huge property and revenues of the Municipal Council which fell to them, they never paid a cent on the Municipal Debentures and would not even pay the comparatively small amount of the pensions of retired municipal employees, despite frequent entreaties by our Ambassador in Nanking

heads of the firm write and do. At any moment a Communist official may enter an office and demand to see all the books; and as new regulations appear every week, it is easy to pick on some trivial offence for which a heavy fine is inflicted. No freedom of movement so essential to business is allowed. To obtain a permit to leave China may take from six months to a year, and the merchant must advertise his departure well in advance, a practice which not infrequently leads to blackmail by *soi-disants* creditors.

Of all the once great British community of Shanghai there are now only forty-three firms, with about 110 executives and some locally born British clerks. There are about twenty British in Tientsin and a half-dozen each in Hankow and Canton. Of all the multitudinous shipping which once made Shanghai the sixth greatest port in the world, there is one Butterfield & Swire ship from and to Hong Kong once a fortnight and one Chinese ship.

A curious parallel can be seen in some respects between Shanghai now and life in the Canton factories in the last century. But the mandarins were a highly cultivated people and, though difficult to get at, were at least human and, when encountered, amenable to reason. Today we are confronted with a small ring of fanatics utterly dehumanized by their Russian training, impervious to any sense of reason or truth. There is obviously no question of going to war with them. But there are other ways in which we can effectively make our displeasure felt.

TRADE WITH CHINA

It cannot but be thought that the stress laid by Whitehall on the fact that only trade *in* China is ended, not trade *with* China, and the project of forming a new association of merchants in England to carry on trade with the Chinese Government is a grave mistake. Financially such an enterprise seems not particularly promising. The value of British exports to China in 1951 was little over £2½ millions and in the first three months of this year only about £614,000. But it is the psychological error of at once forming some new association to endeavour to carry on trade, in spite of all the loss and indignity inflicted on us, that stands out so conspicuously. Ignorant as most of the Chinese Communists are of the world, they have long persuaded themselves that Great Britain cannot exist without China's trade. The proposed new trading association will do more than confirm this delusion. They will see in it a new possibility of driving a wedge between us and America. 'For,' they will tell themselves, 'these British imperialists will submit to anything in the hope of making some money. They will manage to get round the ban on sending us the machinery, rubber and steel that we need if we stand firm and play our cards well.'

It is possible that in the coming years the attitude generally of the Chinese Communists may undergo some change. There are reports, not wholly unworthy of notice, that there are divided counsels in Peking, and that the real power is wielded not by Mao Tse-tung, whose Chinese nature, it is believed, has not been wholly corrupted by Marxism, but by the cold-blooded denationalised, inhuman Liu Shao-chi and others of the Moscow-trained group. So terrifically have the Communists been driving things in the past two years that it may seem impossible for them to maintain the pace. Certainly there is little doubt that Korea and the heavy payments to Russia for arms and aeroplanes are putting a severe strain on the Communists' resources.

* * *

But speculation on these topics only makes the need for decisive action by us the clearer. For nearly two and a half years, we have kept a Chargé d'Affaires in Peking, moping about on the chance that the Communist Government will notice him. We cannot un-recognise China, but, with the departure of the British merchants, the last excuse for keeping Mr. Lamb in this humiliating position will have gone. It is not for us to go to the Communists begging for trade. If they want trade with us, let them come to us and show that they are prepared to act as civilised people. Until then, surely the only wise and dignified course is to make it plain that we desire no dealings with them.

EDITORIAL

SPANISH PAINTED SCULPTURE

DURING the sixteenth century the practice of colouring statues, which had been accepted without question for about two thousand years, fell into disfavour in every country of Europe, except Spain. As a result, when the art everywhere else was almost dead and Bernini was beginning to work in Rome, the Spanish sculptors, unconcerned with the rest of the world, were producing the finest coloured statues in their history.

The reason for this was the conservatism of Spain, by which I mean more than a reluctance to change, rather the whole hidden force of the terrible integrity and stubbornness in this country, still remote behind its barrier of snow mountains. This conservatism was powerfully backed by the church which, in Spain, has dominated art of every kind, even the style of the furniture. Nearly all the sculpture of this great period had a strictly practical purpose, laid down in the contract, either a legend to teach, a doctrine to embody (the Immaculate Conception, the Forgiveness of Sins), or a saint to be represented. These church patrons, who were usually neither more nor less advanced artistically than any other parish committee, aimed, always, at realism, but, as Malraux wrote recently, 'realism in art is an incomprehensible notion.' The artists, accordingly, interpreted it in their own way.

We jib at the idea of coloured statues because we associate them with waxworks, plaster statuettes on sale near the cathedral, dolls, Neapolitan cribs, chinoiserie and imitation Della Robbia plaques. The older writers (nearly all French) on polychromatic art used to make allowance for this prejudice and point out, as a knockdown argument, that the ancient Greeks, 'even Phidias', used to colour their statues and give them glass or metal eyes. But today the ancient Greeks, even Phidias, have fallen, in their turn, out of fashion. The argument has broken down, but our prejudice remains.

It is a prejudice that disappears as soon as you have the chance to study, in Seville for instance, the incomparable art of Montañes. But all the same, even though we have to get rid of the association of colour with waxworks and statuettes, there is a clue here to a source of power in the Spanish sculptors, the fact that even at their most ambitious they never lost touch with popular art. The fairground pictures (which Murillo had to paint to keep body and soul together), the coloured dwarfs and giants of the processions, the huge stuffed images of the *fallas*, the little images of the sweet-shops, these were all created out of straw and paper by the same people who knelt in church before the wonderful polychrome statues and felt, as the church intended, that the colour made them more approachable and more dear. Never have any works of art been more greatly beloved. Some of them became miraculous, others have been carried for three hundred years or more in the processions of Holy Week, eagerly awaited for this one appearance; others remain for ever in their side chapels, the loved interceders and friends.

In this way the Spanish sculptors, more fortunate perhaps than they knew, retained the innermost mystery of art, the ancient justification of the artist in society, *the power of creating magic images*. From the very moment that these images left the workshop with their colouring and gilding complete, the mysticism of the people gave them a separate life of their own, so that twice at least, in the case of Torrigiano and Alonso Cano, their creators were sent to prison for destroying them as soon as they were finished.

Again, from their inborn conservatism, the Spaniards carved almost entirely in wood, and this, too, the releasing of the spirit from the tree and the conjuring up

of figures from the living wood, is related to the magic or healing aspect of art. Their favourite materials were oak and walnut in the North and pinewood in the South. The best pinewood was supposed to come from Cuenca.

* * *

The detailed history of Spanish sculpture has to be traced separately in every province and is very complicated. But you have a general picture of a country where the native Gothic schools were absolutely at home and flowering into every kind of extravagance, and where the Renaissance appeared as an exotic which often met (in Castile, for example) with a cold and suspicious reception. Then after 1500 the links with Italy grew firmer and the newly-rich noblemen, in the disarming way wealth has, felt the necessity of encouraging modern art. Marbles and bronzes were imported in large quantities; Spanish artists went to study in Italy and Italian artists appeared in Spain, some of them bringing hordes of Genoese workmen and stonecutters to run up tombs and decorate palaces. Between 1510 and 1520 Jacopo Florentino was in Granada, Andrea Sansovino or his disciples in Toledo, and Torrigiano in Seville, and a little later the Leoni family settled in Madrid and worked there for three generations, executing enormous numbers of statues for the Escorial and the Royal Palace. At the same time native sculptors, such as Daniel Forment of Aragon, returned from Florence completely Italianised and made a fortune with entirely Italian work. This was the danger point, when alabaster tombs and *retablos* multiplied and it looked as if colour would disappear altogether from sculpture. But the mighty ecclesiastical tradition intervened, that and the character of the country itself with its violent light and shadow, its plains and snowy clouds that ask for colour to complement them, and its long tradition of coloured Mudejar art.

In the history of Spanish art you have, time and again, this question of the transformation of foreign influences and of foreign artists by the irresistibly strong atmosphere of Spain. Some, like El Greco, are absorbed immediately; others, like

Pompeio Leone, appear to succumb, after many years, almost against their will. In these notes I want to consider the Spanish *imagineros*, the makers of single figure sculptures, and their reactions to the powerful current of Italian influence and the way they used it for their own purpose.

ALONSO BERREGUETE

The most famous and certainly the most remarkable of these early visitors to Italy was Alonso Berreguete. He was the son of the Royal painter Pedro Berreguete, and was born about 1490 at Paredes de Nava near Palencia. As soon as his father died, Alonso set out for Florence and enrolled himself as a pupil of Michelangelo. He seems to have had a marked success, since he accompanied his master to Rome and made such progress that Bramante, on Raphael's advice, chose him out of a number of competitors to make a copy of the Laocoon, to be cast in bronze. After

this training it would seem as if Berreguete *must* come back home a confirmed neo-classicist, like Daniel Forment, particularly as on his return in 1518 he was appointed court painter at Saragossa to Charles V, and his first commission was an alabaster tomb for the Royal favourite, Chancellor Selvagio. But at heart the Emperor cared very little for artistic matters and before long he had forgotten about his court painter. Berreguete's petitions were ignored and his schemes for decorating the Royal Chapel were shelved year by year. In 1526 he gave up the struggle and, like all his colleagues, set up a workshop and began to look for commissions in monasteries and churches.

It was now that he was leading a hard provincial life, with the glorious trip to Italy behind him, that Berreguete's true originality appeared. From his first *retablos*, undertaken for the monks of La Mejorada and San Benito, it is clear that what had impressed him *most* in Florence was not Michelangelo, after all, but Donatello—the late Donatello, that is, when the old master had grown impatient with the classical revival and ignoring everything that went on around him returned to early mediaevel forms to express his intense spiritual feeling. The reliefs on the bronze pulpit in the San Lorenzo and the *Pietà* now in the Victoria and Albert Museum have neither rhythm nor perspective; they are crowded groups of figures which appear to be made almost awkward by their emotion and whose strange expression touches us to the heart. Berreguete, it is clear, had been touched by them also, and it is characteristically Spanish of him that he did not worry about this style being 'dowdy' and, superficially speaking, about fifty years out of date. He was returning to a country, after all, where Gothic cathedrals were still in process of erection, and in any case he was a Spaniard and it was his business to express the religion of the heart.

The result was a style so extraordinary that, from Berreguete's day up to our own, he has been held to be an incompetent genius without the technique to express his inner fire. But of course it is absurd to suppose that Berreguete, who was a trained architect as well as a sculptor, did not understand perspective, or that after all those months of copying the Laocoon he could not 'do' classical anatomy. He did, in fact, carve figures in the classic style if he thought it necessary, but nothing of the kind appeared in the *retablos* of La Mejorada and San Benito. The figures are solidly grounded on the earth, but they are either drawn out to an exaggerated height or made short and heavy as Berreguete's excited fancy demands; their gestures spill out in all directions and their drapery sometimes hides the bodies completely in bell-like folds and sometimes clings to them as though drenched in water. The faces, above all, are some of the most extraordinary ever carved out of wood. Berreguete has reminiscences of the Laocoon, and of those haunting faces of the Donatello *Pietà* with their slit-like eyes, but his technique is almost entirely impressionist, with deep pits of shadow that make the faces seem at times more human than animal in their violent emotion, while the heads are distorted into triangles or huge, dome-like constructions with wreathing hair. There were no types in this early work of Berreguete and no formulas. He seems to have worked as the spirit moved him, at an unendurable tension. Small wonder that the monks of San Benito were doubtful about the finished *retablo*, and after several alterations, still felt disinclined to pay. The church authorities followed the custom of getting artists to value each other's work, perhaps hoping by this means to reduce the number of law-suits with these fractious beings, but, if so, they hoped in vain. Berreguete on this occasion scouted round and found a number of friends who supported him in swearing that the work was marvellous in its perfection. He refused to produce the designs and it is quite likely that he had none: he said in the end that he had a sketch, but could not produce that either. It is very much to the credit of the monastery that in the end they accepted both the *retablo* and the statues for the high altar, and in this way cleared the path for Berreguete's future success. This led, in 1539, to the greatest undertaking of his career, the thirty-six choir-stalls of Toledo Cathedral,

whose furious saints and prophets appear to have had a decisive influence on El Greco when he arrived to settle in Toledo thirty years later. It is worth noticing that Berreguete, like El Greco, used often to be accused of defective vision.

As a single-figure sculptor Berreguete is well represented in the Museo of Valladolid. Here can be seen the whole series from the altar at San Benito, the frightening prophets, the extraordinary St. John of the Calvary, the 'mighty soldiers trembling beneath their load' and the *Abraham*, the *St. Christopher* and the *St. Sebastian*. These last three show at its best the extremely beautiful and fantastic polychromacy of Berreguete. The *St. Sebastian* is in warm flesh tones, the face a little darker than the body, and the nostrils, ears and eyelids touched with carmine red. The eyebrows and hair are an odd light reddish brown and a few drops of blood issue from the wounds. The whole figure gleams with gold, as if burning with fire. The *Sacrifice of Abraham* and the *St. Christopher* also make use of this gleaming gold in contrast with the streaming dark hair, and are remarkable among other things for the strange emotional effect of the narrow bands of drapery.[1] But it is not of much use to try to describe the work of Berreguete. He was an original artist, and his forms, once they have been seen, can easily become an obsession.

JUAN DE HUNI

The next outstanding master of the school of Valladolid was Juan de Juni, considered by Berreguete to be the best sculptor, after himself, in the country, and chosen by him as the valuer of some of his work in Toledo. In the guide-books de Juni is usually called a disciple of Michelangelo, but it seems very doubtful whether he ever went to Italy at all. He strikes one as Burgundian, which is not wonderful considering his name was really Jean de Joigny, and Joigny is in Champagne. He arrived at Leon about 1533 and reached Salamanca and Valladolid about 1540, a typical late-Gothic northern artist, in love with excessive movement, flying drapery and corkscrew twists, who lost his head, as so many notherners have done, under the influence of Spain. The influence, in this case, was the work of Berreguete, combined, perhaps, with the sobering effect of a grave illness which seized him in Salamanca. It was after this (and after Berreguete had departed for Toledo, leaving Juni a clear field) that he developed his violently characteristic style which can be studied in Valladolid, Segovia, Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo. A wild restlessness, as though a hot wind were blowing the heavy draperies, puts all his figures into high motion, even those (such as St. Anna) who are traditionally calm and placid. Since the figures themselves are broad heavy types, this sets a problem in equilibrium, but Juni was a master, an expert organiser of weights and masses and the figures he created are of great beauty. His polychromatist, Benito Rabuyate, succeeded in getting a range of golden tonalities into his colours, as well as imitating, where necessary, livid and gangrenous flesh with waxwork accuracy.

Juni's *Entombment of Christ* in the Valladolid Museum is not his best work, but placed as it is at the end of the high open rooms of the old monastery, it is certainly the most striking of them all, and since he spent five years of his life and much anxiety on it, perhaps he would have wished it to be remembered as his masterpiece. It consists of the six traditional figures surrounding the body of the dead Christ, larger than life size, in polychromed wood, and words can hardly express the demoniac energy of the group. St. Joseph of Arimathea plucks out a large thorn and holds it between finger and thumb with an almost gloating expression; the Virgin Mary staggers and falls and is met by the violent gesture of Mary Salome; the congealed blood on the knees of the Christ is almost greenish in colour, while the swollen eyelids are the acme of horror. It is true that Juni does not descend to the homeliest details of the Burgundian school, to the Magdalene, for instance, blowing her nose or even wiping it with her fingers, but the expression, not of grief, but of what grief is supposed to be like, could scarcely go any further.

The subject of the Entombment (like the *Pietà*) was introduced from the Northern countries into the South, and if you

[1] These narrow bands wound round the chest or the forehead are a characteristic of Michelangelo, who used them however as a kind of *restraint* for his tremendous figures

compare this group of Juni's with the terra-cotta entombments of Guido Mazzoni of Modena, nearly a hundred years earlier, you will see at a glance how the northern genius, which in Italy became adapted and modified, found in Spain a congenial home where all its extravagance was encouraged and understood. Spain was ready from the very first, even in the warm South, even in the country of sugar-canes and orange groves, to welcome everything that the North could offer in the way of penitence and self-torture. The art of Juan de Juni and Hieronymus Bosch after their arrival in Spain shows the same kind of expansion.

GREGORIO HERNANDEZ

But in Valladolid one can also study (and particularly in Holy Week) the first truly native, truly Spanish sculptor of the baroque period, Gregorio Hernandez. It is easy, for this generation at any rate, to be drawn to the extravagance of Berreguete and de Juni, but to appreciate Hernandez, one must care a little about Spain.

Documents of his life are very scanty, but he was born about 1570 in Galicia and came to Valladolid as a young man to study under de Juni. After this he appears hardly ever to have left Valladolid, or even to have gone out of his workshop, where he employed a large number of friends and relations. He was intensely religious, charitable to the poor, but, like many sculptors, short tempered. To image-making he gave up his whole life, and he was the first great popular realist of the north of Spain. This Berreguete, of course, had not been. His figures had been criticised because they were not equally satisfactory from every angle, to which he had replied: 'I leave this "four-profile" business to Michelangelo.' But Hernandez's figures, unlike Berreguete's, *had* to be viewed from every angle, since many of them had been ordered by the *cofradias* or religious brotherhoods, as processional images for the great ceremonies of Holy Week. These Semana Santa processions are at their most moving and austere in Valladolid, where the crowds wait motionless in the streets often in the rain, or with the cold night wind guttering the candles, for the hooded ranks of the Nazarenes to pass, with their long shadows going before them, and behind them the slowly moving *pasos*. There is nothing theatrical here, but an intensity and concentration which, now as then, was well and ferociously interpreted by Hernandez. He himself walked in the procession of the Cofradia of the Sorrows, and for the Cofradia he made the figures of the *Mater Dolorosa* and the *pasos* of several figures representing the scenes of the Passion—*Christ at the Column*, *Ecce Homo*, *Simon Cyrene*, the *Descent from the Cross* and several others.

He specialised also in *Cristos yacentes*—the dead Christ, with streaming wounds, lying stretched full length on the ground. There is an example in the Museo at Valladolid and an even finer one at the convent of San Plácido, both with the dead flesh polychromed in wonderful tones of olive or ivory and both with faces of great morbid power. The eyes are modelled under the half-closed bloodstained lids in a look of eternal reproach, and if we do not feel this reproach and the pity that inspired it, we shall miss something of the greatest importance in Spanish art. It was, again, Juni who introduced those motives into Spain, which multiplied in the seventeenth century into Flagellations and severed heads of St. Paul and the Baptist in every parish that could afford them.

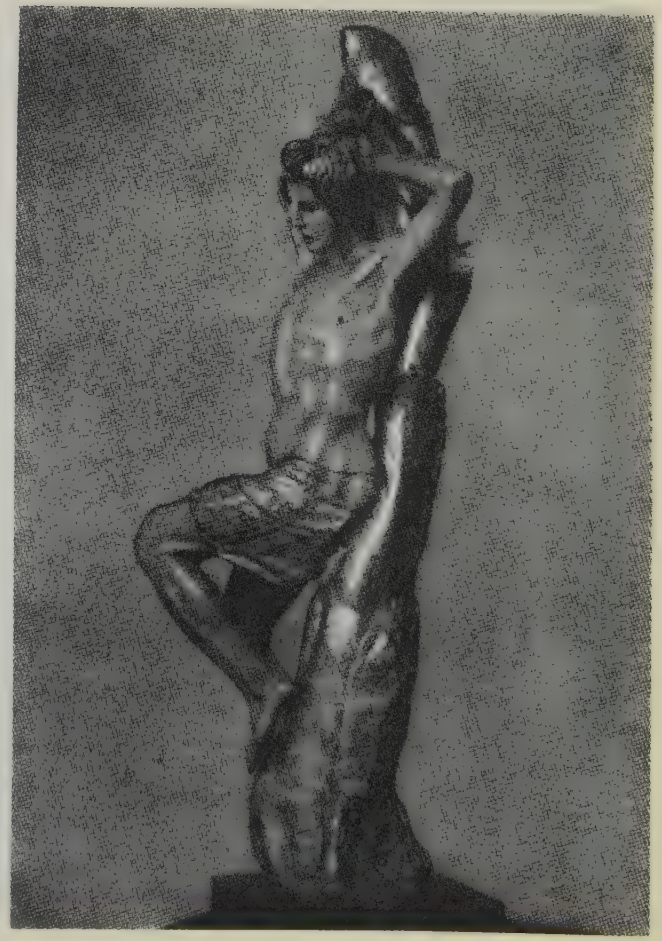
Hernandez, like Murillo, shows clearly his links with truly popular religious art. Italian or Italianate work there was in plenty in Valladolid[1] but Hernandez cared nothing for them. Even the influence of Juni seems not to have lasted for long, or at least Hernandez soon asserted his own forcible personality. Like most truly Spanish artists he was a *retratista*, engrossed with his peasant models, and so 'good at getting a likeness' that he was threatened, at times, with caricature. His inspiration, too, was uneven—not remarkable considering the amount of work he undertook—and at times he was very much more 'popular' than others. Villains and executioners in particular, with their curled moustaches and staring eyes, were his downfall. Whatever else he may be, however, he is never feeble. His hall-mark is the deep sharp creases of the drapery and the planes and violent indentations of

[1] One of the disciples of Leoni was working at that very time in the Cathedral

JUAN DE HUNI

The Entombment (*Valladolid Museum*)

ALONSO BERREGUETE *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (*Valladolid Museum*)



ALONSO BERREGUETE *St. Sebastian* (*Valladolid Museum*)

GREGORIO HERNANDEZ *The Good Thief* (*Valladolid Museum*)

GREGORIO HERNANDEZ *Descent from the Cross* (*Valladolid Museum*)

BERREGUETE — *St. John* (*Valladolid Museum*)

JERONIMO HERNANDEZ — *The Resurrected Christ* (*Seville*)

EL GRECO — *The Resurrected Christ* (*Hospital de Tavera, Toledo*)

the hair, as though Hernandez enjoyed or expressed himself by hacking deeply into the wood. When his method triumphs, as it does in the *Santa Veronica* or the *Simon Cyrene* or the powerful *Good Thief*, you have a realism so plain and so touching that it is beyond criticism. It was said in the sculptor's own day that the figure of Christ at the Column, the night before it was sent away from the workshop, turned and spoke to him.

* * *

One detects in Gregorio Hernandez the nature of the Puritan, and one of the tasks he undertook was the reform of the actual colouring of the images. He abolished the large areas of brilliant gold and gave orders to his polychromatist to work in sober realistic tones and to restrict the number of colours. At this point, therefore, it might be as well to have a few notes on the Spanish technique of polychromatic sculpture.

Every statue had to be rubbed down and treated with a preparation to make the wooden surface perfectly smooth. The colouring consisted of a number of processes and was entrusted to three different kinds of skilled craftsmen.

The *dorador*, or gilder, was considered merely as an artisan. He covered the image with a layer of fine gold leaf, which could be burnished, half-burnished, or matt. The *estafador*, still an artisan, but more highly skilled, laid the colours of the robe over the golden foundation which gave them a telling depth and richness, or sometimes, if a transparent pigment was used, shone through them; then, with a very fine tool and with an incredible patience, he scraped away the fine patterns on the border of the sleeve or the tiny flowers on the cloak so that these, on the finished statue, would appear in lines of gold. The *encarnador* or flesh-painter, was a maestro, of far superior calling to the other two who only worked under his directions: he might, in fact, be an artist of very high standing, or even the sculptor himself. In any case, the sculptor, who was himself under very strict orders from his ecclesiastical patrons, kept the closest possible eye on his polychromatist and on the quality not only of the work but of the materials. Here is part of a contract drawn up between Gregorio Hernandez and his regular polychromatist, Valentin Diaz, relating to a group of *The Holy Family*. It reflects, of course, the instructions given to Hernandez himself.

> Firstly, the flesh must be matt and the complexions suitable to a child, a young woman and a man. The eyes shall be of crystal; the child's hair shall be finished with powdered gold. In general the hair of each shall be in keeping with their age and station and shall in every way conform to the orders of Gregorio Hernandez and the wishes of the officers of the Fraternity.
>
> The robes shall be painted with the best oil colours to be found in Seville.
>
> The cloak of the Virgin shall be blue, its edges decorated with gold and other colours and a painted border, touched with gold, as indicated by Gregorio Hernandez. The border shall be narrow, exactly like the borders on light cloaks.
>
> The Virgin's dress shall be carmine, resembling a very fine purple; it too must have a border, the best and richest possible, touched with powdered gold...
>
> The Virgin's headdress shall be painted to look like some gauze material with a little gold fringe and a lace border. The girdle shall also have a gold ball-fringe and great care shall be taken to choose for it a colour which will contrast pleasingly with the purple of the robe.
>
> As to the robes of The Child Jesus, they must be violet. On his little shoes there shall be imitation pearls and ornamentation resembling embroidery.
>
> [*Similar detailed instructions are given for the robes of St. Joseph, then.*]
>
> Since it is of great importance to Gregorio Hernandez that the figures should appear to the best advantage and should seem to be entirely his work, if Gregorio Hernandez is not satisfied with them, then the painter shall be held not to have done or completed his work and shall not be paid.

No wonder that most of our knowledge of the *imagineros* is drawn from their law-suits and depositions in court. The only thing that seems surprising, at first, is that any art should be produced at all under such hampering restrictions. But history

shows that artists are not discouraged, in fact they appear to thrive, under cautious, reactionary and overscrupulous patrons. This was certainly so in the sixteenth- to seventeenth-century school of Seville.

Seville, by the end of the sixteenth century, was very well used to the conceptions of the Italian Renaissance. During the most prosperous period, when the Sevillans had been making enormous fortunes, marbles, bronzes and even complete tombs had been imported wholesale from Genoa and Naples, while travelling artists had flocked to the city and (in spite of the fact that Michelangelo had heard that the Spanish did not pay well) had undertaken many commissions in the cathedral itself. The most important visitor of all had been Torrigiano, who arrived in Seville, having made Florence and London too hot to hold him, in time for the marriage ceremonies of Charles V. The Italian influence was then at its height and even the Emperor, though it was difficult to get him to attend to artistic matters, had ordered the wedding chapel at the Alcazar to be decorated with tiles by Niculoso Francisco.

The chief monument which Torrigiano left behind him[1] was his St. Jeremy Penitent, now in the Museo Provinciale. It is an impressive and perfectly 'corrected' study of a powerful nude old man, kneeling in the traditional attitude, with every muscle and sinew showing in a display of science which amazed Seville. The polychromatist achieved some of his best work in the white hair and dark colouring of the flesh, and Torrigiano must have wished that Michelangelo, whom he hated, could have been there to see this great success. For the next hundred years the sculptors of Seville studied their anatomy, partly from the copies of Greek marbles collected by the Duke of Alcala in the Casa de Pilatos.

But, by the end of the sixteenth century, foreigners no longer crowded to Seville and sculptors no longer went to Italy for their training. The Italian inspiration is there, but far away, and we have to deal with a truly native art, as though we had come into the cool innermost courtyard of an Andalusian house where the outside world has receded and life is sufficient to itself. The astonishing power, the touching melancholy could have been produced nowhere else and at no other time.

D. & P. M. Fitzgerald

This essay on Spanish Painted Sculpture will be continued in the August issue with a special study of Juan Martinez Montañes, the master of the School of Seville, and Francisco Salzillo of Murcia. There will also be a colour plate.

[1] Torrigiano had a violent quarrel with one of his noble patrons, in the middle of which he smashed the marble Virgin which he had just finished, with a hammer. He was condemned to prison and starved himself to death there in 1528

The Saar Problem

ELIZABETH WISKEMANN

'THE SAAR' as an international problem was created by the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France at the end of the first German War. The territory involved is small; it lies between Luxembourg, Lorraine and the Rhineland, on the river Saar which flows into the Moselle near Trier. It is a region which played little part in pre-industrial history, forming as it did a fragment of the political welter which existed in Western Germany before Napoleon. In 1815 the Saar territory became part of Rhenish Prussia, and after that Prussian officials began to tidy the place up. As the nineteenth century proceeded, the coal-mines in the Saar gained in importance, and after 1870 a big iron industry was built up there on the basis of ore from Lorraine. By 1914 the Saar basin, highly industralised though it had thus become, still played no very great part in the German economy. With the first defeat of Germany, the Saarland became — overnight — something of a Franco-German economic hinge, creaking miserably when left without the oil of understanding.

Since industrial development had linked the Saar so closely with Lorraine, it seemed logical to the French in 1918 that the return of Lorraine should bring them the Saar too; although the Saar mines did not produce good coking coal, which was what the French most needed, France was short of every kind of coal, and this fortified the case for annexation. But there was nothing French about the Saarlanders—strikingly little in view of their proximity to France; they were a backward and servile German population which had been harshly exploited by German industrialists like the Stumms and the Röchlings. Since nationality was the principle of the day, the Peace Conference rejected the French claim. Instead, it was decided that the newly-born League of Nations should administer the Saar Territory for fifteen years; at the end of that time the Saarlanders should choose between Germany, France or a retention of the *status quo*. Meanwhile the Saar coal-mines went to France as a part of reparation payments.

From 1920 until 1935 the Saarland was well administered and prosperous under the rule of a Commission of five nominees of the League of Nations, of whom one was always a Saarlander. The worst feature of the period was the fact that the Saar miners had become employees of the French state so that class and national hatreds were quickly identified. It was this circumstance which German Nationalist,[1] and of course National-Socialist, propaganda was able to exploit before ever the Nazis came to power. The plebiscite fell due exactly two years after Hitler was appointed Chancellor of the Reich; an overwhelming majority for Germany thus became a matter of essential Nazi prestige. During 1934 a tornado of malice and falsehood was let loose in the Saar against which officials of the League of Nations were helpless. It brought a vote of over ninety per cent for Germany (with eight per cent for the *status quo* and virtually zero for France); after this Germany bought back the mines. But the mines in French hands and the Nazi plebiscite campaign, leaving bitter memories behind them, have created a tradition.

In 1945 the Saar became part of the French Zone of Occupied Germany. The French now aimed at the economic union of the Saar with France which would involve the political autonomy of the Saar, the same relationship as that between Luxembourg and Belgium. In 1947 France agreed to the economic unification of the three Western Zones of Germany on condition that her Saar policy was accepted by America and Britain, pending the final

[1] I use this term in the strongly chauvinist sense which attached to the phrase *deutschnational* in the days of Hugenberg's German-Nationalist party

peace treaty with Germany. At the same time the French authorities in Saarbrücken had consulted with the anti-Nazi politicians, mainly Catholics and Socialists, who had come forward in the Saar as they had in the rest of Germany. The Saarland had been densely populated for many decades and dependent upon external food supplies mainly imported from Lorraine; it had been terribly bombed in the recent war and now it was starving. The new French plan meant, among other things, French provisions and no dismantling; there is no doubt that the big majority of Saarlanders were glad to accept it; indeed, it seems probable that when in June 1947 General Koenig extended the frontiers of the Saar Territory, its new inhabitants, too, were thankful. A constitution for the autonomous Saarland was drawn up, and an Assembly of fifty members elected. Many former Nazis were disfranchised as elsewhere in Germany, the two strongest groups to emerge being the Catholic People's Party and the Socialist Party of the Saar. There were also three Democrats and two Communists in the new *Landtag* but only the Communists objected to the constitution, which, after a few amendments, became law. A Catholic-Socialist Coalition Government was formed.

Blackmail

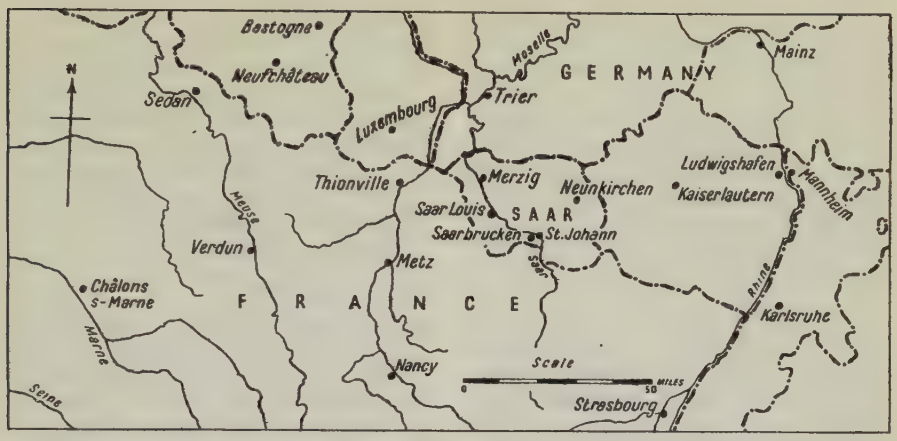
It is of some importance to record these facts which are already being twisted out of recognition by those with an interest in doing so. Part of the political game of the moment is to say that autonomy was nothing but a piece of French famine blackmail, and that the elections to the *Landtag* were held without the constitution having been publicly announced. The latter assertion is certainly untrue though there may well have been villages where the inhabitants were ignorant of what was at stake. As for the blackmail indictment, it is true that with Germany still prostrate, the Saar leaders saw no alternative but to agree to what the French proposed, which was certainly in the best interests of the population. It is true that some of these Saarland politicians had lived in France and acquired French passports, because after the plebiscite Germany had offered them only persecution of the worst kind. These men and others had welcomed the French plan as a step towards some sort of Europeanisation of the Saar, the oiling of the Franco-German hinge. The ten years in the Reich had been lean and harsh for the Saar which had never been able to compete with the Ruhr; in retrospect, the much-abused League of Nations regime had become attractive, but some kind of international guarantee for autonomy seemed the best solution of all, and this was anticipated in the Preamble to the new constitution.

Five years have passed since the elections of 1947 and fresh elections are due within the next few months. Within these five years the situation has been transformed above all by the remarkable economic recovery of Western Germany. Further, the revival of an uncompromising German nationalism has been both the cause and the effect of growing friction engendered between the French and the Saarlanders by their economic union. The latter was defined in a series of Conventions signed on 3 March 1950, which were expressly stated to be provisionally operative without prejudice to the final Peace Treaty.

The Basic Grievance

Before one examines the quarrels which have by now soured political life in the Saar, it should be stated that the Territory today is possibly the most prosperous in Europe. This overwhelmingly industrial population is fully employed; thanks partly to the armaments boom since the war in Korea, the iron and steel industry for the first time employs more men than do the mines. Prices are high, but the population is well-fed and well-clothed; it is obviously better off than the working population in France or in Germany; it is probably more flourishing than it ever was between the wars, even in the boom years of the later 'twenties. The Saarland workers are also well off for social insurances and holidays, the Saar Government paying fifty-two per cent of the social insurance contributions.

While the Saarlanders are conscious of their prosperity and even aware that it depends largely upon their economic union with France, they are none the less dissatisfied, indeed irritated. The basic



reason is, perhaps, that the fourth of the Franco-Saar Conventions 'confided to the French State the responsibility for the exploitation of the Saar coal-mines.' Thus the old trouble of the League of Nations period is re-created. The miners in the Saar live different lives from the miners of Britain, for it is their characteristic that they live out in the villages and work their own small plots of land. But they have learnt in the last thirty years to regard themselves as *the* Saarlanders *par excellence*, and if their employer is the *Régie des Mines*, they are certain to take pride in giving an anti-French lead. Convention IV set up a Mines Council and a Mines Committee, on each of which France and the Saar are equally represented, but the French always have the casting-vote when decisions are taken, and the managerial staff of the mines is French. When wages are at issue, the *Régie des Mines* rejects the possibility of collective bargaining, since it declares that the Saar miners' wages must necessarily depend upon prices fixed for the whole of France. The Saarlanders also complain that the French fail to invest enough capital in the Saar mines—this was a favourite grievance between 1920 and 1935. The complaint has become angrier since Marshall Aid which, the Saarlanders maintain, was intended for investment in industries like theirs, whereas they have received nothing like a proportionate share of the allocation to the French economic area as a whole.

The middle-class in the Saar is small; it consists mainly of people with German business connections. While the workers' opposition to the French has only been openly expressed this year in the election of the anti-French miner, Paul Kutsch, as Chairman of the Saar T.U.C., the Saar business men agitated against the customs and currency union with France before the Conventions were signed, demanding the same freedom of trade with Germany as with France. Altogether they disliked the taste of Saar autonomy and objected to the steps hitherto taken as having too permanent an air. A group of these people, led by the clothes manufacturer, Richard Becker (whose firm has branches in Frankfurt and Munich), attached themselves *en bloc* to the three deputies of the Democratic Party, changing it overnight into a Party which, like that of the two Communists, challenged the constitution of 1947. In the spring of 1951 the Saar Government therefore suppressed the Democratic Party of the Saar—and its Press—as unconstitutional, and expelled certain individuals associated with it.

A New, Bitter Phase

This action, again cause and effect of hardening Franco-German relations, inaugurated a new, more bitter phase which was interesting in the degree to which it revived the emotions of the plebiscite campaign seventeen years before. Herr Hoffmann, the President of the

Government of the Saar, had been leader of a Catholic anti-Nazi group which had worked for the retention of the League of Nations *status quo*. He remembered the use the Nazis had made of the weakness of the Weimar Republic and then of the League of Nations authorities to defeat them both. It therefore seemed to him that for any regime to tolerate a party which rejected the law of the land (whether provisional or not), was to play with political suicide.

The Deutsche Saarbund

On the other side the men he had expelled began to agitate in Germany where they formed the *Deutsche Saarbund* and soon brought out a fortnightly called the *Deutsche Saar Zeitung*. This paper indulges in all but Nazi language—when one reads it, one forgets that Hitler is defeated and destroyed. It accuses Herr Hoffmann and all those who accept the present state of affairs in the Saar of treason and separatism, as if frontiers were for ever sacrosanct and could never be altered by historical circumstance—a curious theory in relation to the Franco-German frontier lands. The *Deutsche Saar Zeitung*, further, significantly insists on identifying Germany with Hitler, for it reproaches Herr Hoffmann and a number of Socialists in the Saar above all for their opposition to Germany at the time of the plebiscite; it excludes the view that the best Germans might have wished to preserve whatever German territory they could save from Nazi rule.

The most topical issue between the two sides arises out of the cry of brutal tyranny thrown at Herr Hoffmann's head by the Democratic Party within the Saar Territory and beyond it. It is, no doubt, annoying to be forbidden to discuss a regime which one wishes to abolish. On the other hand, it is a little absurd to abuse the preventing authority as terroristic when it has neither a secret police nor concentration camps, and no one is really afraid of it. Having heard that the French authorities and the Hoffmann Government prevented German newspapers from entering the Saar territory, I was interested recently to find in the first restaurant I went into in Saarbrücken (a few hundred yards from the French Diplomatic Mission) a number of the *Deutsche Illustrierte* with articles about the virtues of Frau Goebbels by her mother,[1] about the excellence of generations of Krupps and the wickedness of the French in Tunisia. I was interested, also, to find that the waiter who served me was a refugee from Communist Saxony although I had been told that the Saar Government accepted no refugees from Eastern Germany.

The Balance of Power

It was about a year ago, on 29 May 1951, that the German Government sent a note to the Allied High Commissioners to complain about French action in the Saar, and protests became loud in the German Chamber of Deputies against the suppression of the Saar Democratic Party: the Germans also brought up this matter before the Council of Europe. After a seeming *rapprochement* between France and Germany expressed in the Schuman Plan in 1950, in 1951 the balance of Franco-German power shifted with several thumps. Above all the American decision to rearm Germany made the French more determined than ever to preserve their economic control of the Saar. The latter territory, with its coal-mines and iron mills would be more than ever a hinge if the Schuman Pool were to be realised. By 1951 the French were afraid that Monsieur Schuman's project would merely subject their own to Germany's resurgent heavy industry. They began to insist that a balance could only be preserved through the Franco-Saar economic union, since, with the Saar, French steel production amounted to thirty-four per cent of the total for all participating countries and Germany's to thirty-five per cent, whereas, with the Saar incorporated in Germany, the figures would change to twenty-seven and forty-two. This was a favourite thesis of Monsieur Gilbert Grandval, the French High Commissioner in Saarbrücken, who was nominated French Ambassador to the Saar on 27 January 1952.

The French Programme

His appointment appeared to the Germans to be a unilateral anticipation of the final Peace Treaty. It therefore precipitated

[1] This article also extolled Goebbels himself, so human a creature that he invariably found time to devote one hour every day to the artificial bronzing of his face

a crisis which brought Dr. Adenauer and Herr Hoffmann together for the first time under the auspices of the Council of Europe during the Paris meeting of the Committee of Ministers in March. It was hoped to arrive at a Franco-German-Saarland understanding outside the general contractual Agreements between the three Western Powers and Western Germany. After a good beginning the conversations proved sterile. Dr. Adenauer appeared willing to accept the French programme for the Saar if the new *Landtag* there were 'freely' elected and then voted approval of the French plan. The administrative suppression of the Saar Democratic Party had just received legal expression in a law passed in Saarbrücken on 17 March, a law not unlike a clause in the Basic Law of the German Federal Republic. But the Germans could well say that, if no party could fight the *Landtag* elections unless it were pledged to accept the *status quo*, it would be superfluous to put the *status quo* before the *Landtag*. Dr. Adenauer himself, who is probably more interested in West European integration than in anything else, might not have objected to the Paris-Saarbrücken definition of freedom had not the German Social Democrat opposition been pressing home its advantage against him by voicing its excessively nationalistic indignation. A last attempt to appoint a Franco-German commission to examine electoral conditions in the Saar broke down over the proposal to include nominees of the Saar Government among its members.

Neo-Nazi Propaganda

The fact is, that if Monsieur Schuman and Herr Hoffmann give way to the German definition of free elections in the Saar, a great wave of neo-Nazi propaganda from Germany seems inevitable, a travesty of freedom in the opposite direction. The *Deutsche Saar Zeitung*, it has been seen, already reminds one of the Press under Goebbels. It is full of cheap lies and scurrilous abuse. Its Easter issue poured scorn upon Monsieur Grandval as a Jew born in Tunisia who had fought in the French resistance to Hitler; for this Monsieur François-Poncet had the paper confiscated throughout the French Zone of Germany. Leaders of the Saar Democratic Party in Saarbrücken assure one with satisfaction that many numbers of the DSZ are smuggled into the Saar. Meanwhile Prince Hubertus Löwenstein has sent thousands of eagle badges—'the golden eagle of the Reich'—to addresses in the Saar with appeals for free elections under United Nations' control. According to the Saar Democrats, the DSZ and the eagles are financed by German patriotism, but, according not merely to French or Saar regime views but to moderate opinion in Germany itself, money is liberally provided (against Dr. Adenauer's predilections) by the Ministry of all-German Affairs in Bonn. The same moderate German opinion condemns the DSZ as reminiscent of the Nazi weekly *Der Stürmer*. If free elections are to mean an hysterical bombardment like a Nazi plebiscite or a Communist election, United Nations' control would mean as little as did that of the League of Nations in 1935.

The Saarlanders are simple people on the whole, with no political traditions beyond those they have acquired since 1920. Many of them must be rubbing their heads today wondering whether it is wiser to frame or burn the eagle badges. The Catholic clergy has a good deal of influence. Most of the priests belong to the diocese of Trier, whose new Bishop, Dr. Wehr, is less uncompromisingly nationalist than his predecessor. Good judges are inclined to think that if the French would modify some of the 1950 Conventions with real generosity, the majority of Saarlanders might still prefer the *status quo*—always provided that Monsieur Pinay keeps the franc steady. The few more educated inhabitants of the Saar are anxious for a special sanction from the Council of Europe to take the form perhaps of making Saarbrücken, coal and iron town that it is, the headquarters of the Schuman Pool Authority. But the problem of who should own the Saar is insoluble when France and Germany are on poor terms because plans either to Europeanise the Territory or to consult its inhabitants cease to have any real meaning. The hinge merely creaks.

A reminder to the free nations of the great dilemma they still face

THE GREEK SPY TRIAL

FRANCIS NOEL-BAKER

LAST March twenty-nine men and women appeared before a Greek Court-Martial on charges of espionage.

The trial revealed, more thoroughly and in greater detail than ever before, the exact way in which an underground Communist network operates in a country outside the Soviet sphere. It showed the constant stream of orders reaching that network from the Cominform, the steady flow of information going back, and the variety of tasks the network members undertook, from propaganda to military espionage.

These were all things that the free world already knew—at least in theory. Today, no serious student of Communist techniques could doubt that local party members and their stooges run clandestine organisations, control 'front' parties, take foreign orders, or spy against their country. But this was the first time that the whole range of these activities was exposed, in a single case and in terms of actual men and women, captured radio transmitters and deciphered signals.

It was in the courtroom, and in long interviews with Greek Ministers, police officials and Intelligence officers, that I learned the full story of that section of the Communist underground now known as the Vavoudis network.

Nicholas Vavoudis

The story starts in the summer of 1945. Earlier that year, with the help of British troops, the Greek Government had crushed the first post-war Greek Communist revolt. But the Communist Party itself was still legal. Its leaders were busy reorganising their followers and preparing for the 'second round'. A stream of powerful propaganda issued from their main office at No. 7 Piraeus Street, Athens. Not all their work, however, was on the surface. Obedient to Lenin's maxim that clandestine, illegal activity must always go side by side with open political campaigning, they were also quietly laying the foundations of a new Red underground.

That May, Nikos Zachariades, General Secretary and Leader of the Party, sent for one of his most trusted rank-and-filers, a thirty-nine-year-old mechanic named Elias Arghyriades. He ordered Arghyriades to move at once into a smart, new, five-roomed house, the Villa Avra, in the pleasant seaside suburb of Glyfada, eight miles south-east of Athens. Standing in its own, trim, quarter-acre garden in a sparsely built up section, this house was already rented by another Party member, who was ordered to move out. Arghyriades installed himself there with his mistress, a plump blonde named Catherine Dallas. He told neighbours that she was his wife and that they were caretaking for an aunt. Soon afterwards, Party headquarters ordered two more trusted Communists to join them: a young brother and sister named Filaretos and Roula Lazarides. They explained their presence in the house by saying that Arghyriades was their uncle. Then, at the end of June, when these four subordinates had settled in and it was clear that no suspicions had been aroused, Zachariades himself called at the Villa Avra and brought with him the man he had selected to serve as chief of the new network.

Nicholas Vavoudis was born at Odessa, Russia, in 1903. He arrived in Greece in the mid-twenties, was gaoled in the early 'thirties as a Red agitator, but escaped back to Russia on board a Soviet ship in May 1934. There he was given special training before returning unobtrusively to Greece. His next known assignment was as personal wireless operator and signal officer to Colonel Popov, chief of the Soviet Military Mission with the Greek

partisans during the later stages of the occupation. When the war ended, Vavoudis again went underground. Nothing more was known of him, except by his Communist associates, for the next six years.

The Villa Avra

Meanwhile, however, these associates and he were busy fitting up the cellar of the Villa Avra as a secret radio transmitter station. To cover their building operations, they asked their landlord for permission to make a chicken house in a corner of the garden. In this way attention was diverted from the cellar while they prepared their hide-out there. Its entrance was protected by a concrete block sliding on a rail and was concealed under a washhouse sink. Heat, light and power were laid on, and two powerful radio transmitters installed. One was a wartime British type B2 set, camouflaged in a brown leather suitcase. The other had been assembled out of American components. The range of either was not less than seven hundred miles.

39 Lycurgus Street

The scene now shifts to a small, square, red-tiled artisan's house in the hot, untidy Athens district of Kallithea. A year had passed. Number 39 Lycurgus Street was empty. A vine straggled untended in the yard behind the house and dust swirled against the closed, brown shutters. The owner was hopefully waiting for a tenant. In May 1946, his hopes were answered. A simple-looking, grey-haired old carpenter named Nicholas Kaloumenos rented the house for himself, his wife Urania, his two daughters, seventeen-year-old Margaret, and Mary, then just sixteen, and his young six-year-old son George. They seemed a quiet, respectable family, showed no interest in politics and kept themselves discreetly to themselves. Each morning, they took the *Ethnikos Kiryx*, a stoutly Right Wing paper. In their sitting-room hung a picture of the King and Queen of Greece. At Kallithea High School, Mary made patriotic speeches. The neighbours thought well of the Kaloumenos family, and the local police noted them as people most unlikely to cause trouble.

This was precisely the impression it was intended they should make. A Greek born and reared at Istanbul, Turkey, Kaloumenos had become a Communist and a crony of Zachariades many years before, when the Red Greek leader was living there between the wars. It was Zachariades who told Kaloumenos to take the house at Kallithea in May 1946, and the Greek Communist Party which had paid the rent. The purpose of the move was to provide a second secret radio station for the use of Nicholas Vavoudis.

Once again, an underground crypt was carefully prepared and two more transmitters were installed: another set assembled from American components, and a brand new Russian model. Kaloumenos was a clever craftsman and the hiding place was well concealed. It was, in fact, far safer than the cellar at the Villa Avra. Even to a person standing directly on it, there was no sign that the step outside the kitchen could be lifted out and make a secret entrance, then bolted firmly back into position from underneath. Down below, an electric fan kept air moving in the stuffy cellar. A red light, controlled from above, could flash a warning of danger.

Vavoudis now settled down to work. At first he used the two stations mainly as a channel of communication between the Greek Party leadership in Athens and Cominform stations at Skoplje in Yugoslavia and Sofia, Bulgaria. At the villa he successfully trained the slim, nimble Roula Lazarides as an assistant wireless operator, meanwhile making her his mistress. At the Kaloumenoses' house, he often took young Mary down into his crypt. There he made love to her too. But his efforts to train her to use his radio sets were unsuccessful and her mother complained at the long hours she was spending in the dark, airless crypt.

'Radio Free Greece'

Meanwhile, outside Athens, a second rebellion was brewing. By the summer of 1947 new Red guerrilla bands had sprung up throughout the country. They turned for support, which was promptly given,

to Greece's Communist northern neighbours: Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Then in the autumn of that year, Zachariades and the other leaders of the Party suddenly disappeared from Athens. Soon after they openly proclaimed their solidarity with the guerrillas' 'democratic army' which was pledged to 'liberate' Greece and ally her with the Soviet Union. In reply, on 27 December, the Greek Government declared the Communist Party illegal, closed down its offices, suspended its newspapers and arrested all the active members it could trace. Vavoudis's underground network assumed a new importance.

At this time, it seems that his transmitters at Lycurgus Street and at the Villa Avra were mostly used for signalling guerrilla units inside Greece, informing them of Greek army movements and of developments at Athens. But after July 1947, they took over a big new job. In that month, copying allied wartime tactics, the Cominform established a Greek-speaking 'freedom' radio, claiming to operate from Greek territory, but actually sited in southern Yugoslavia. This self-styled 'Radio Free Greece' depended on the Vavoudis network for a regular supply of background information. So the network was gradually expanded, extra informants were recruited, and three new reserve transmitters were established at stations in other sections of the city.

The Network

For the next two years, the guerrilla war raged in the mountains. But in June 1947 American aid had started reaching Greece; in July 1948 Marshal Tito had broken with the Cominform and, soon after, had sealed the Yugoslav Greek border, cutting the main supply lines of the Reds. In the summer of 1949, the Greek army won crushing victories at Vitsi and Grammos in the north of Greece. The remnants of the guerrilla forces fled for sanctuary to Albania and Bulgaria; the party leadership went into exile with them, and the civil war was over. But the Vavoudis network quietly continued with its work. Now its home base was Bucharest, and it had assumed a triple mission.

The network's first function was to maintain the flow of news about political events, general conditions, wages, prices and a hundred other aspects of daily life in Greece to Cominform headquarters. Radio Free Greece had moved to Bucharest, too, in 1948 and it was on this background information that it built its propaganda programmes.

The network's second task was political: to act as a link between the exiled Central Committee and what was left of the party inside Greece. The Central Committee now operated sometimes from Prague, sometimes from Cominform headquarters at Bucharest. From there it sent orders for more reorganisations of the Red Greek underground, and for penetration, by Communist agents, of other, still legal, Left Wing parties.

The third duty of Vavoudis and his colleagues was straight espionage. It collected and transmitted military information: the size and composition of Greek army units, the location of airfields and naval bases, the siting of defence works and the performance of new weapons.

Rewards and Funds

Difficult and dangerous though these duties were, they had their compensations. Such work needed money, and money in big amounts regularly reached Vavoudis and his friends. At times their expenditure reached twenty thousand dollars in a single month. 'We are the aristocracy of the party now', boasted Vavoudis, when he spent twenty five dollars on a single evening's outing. Life in the Villa Avra was not austere, and Vavoudis complained that Arghyriades was taking to the bottle.

Later, the routes by which the funds reached the Red underground in Athens were unravelled by the Greek police. Head of the financial set-up, they discovered, was Demetrios Batsis, a prominent Athens lawyer and economist, and the son of a distinguished eighty-four-year-old Rear-Admiral. To the outside world, Batsis was known as a wealthy Left Wing intellectual. The economic and technological magazine, *Antaios*, which he published, was treated light-heartedly by his Athenian friends. They joked of his success with

women, commiserated when he divorced his first wife, Lina Ailianos, daughter of a leading Conservative politician, and congratulated him when he married the beautiful twenty-four-year-old Lilian Kalamaro, whose father is a wealthy Italian-Jewish business man. But behind this sleek, polite exterior, Batsis hid a dangerous secret. It was to him that couriers from France smuggled gold sovereigns and packets of dollar bills. And it was he who distributed this money to Vavoudis and the other workers of the Red underground. His couriers were a varied set of people. Some were professional smugglers, sailors and ships' stewards who collected their consignments from Party agents in the dockyards of Marseilles. Others came direct from Paris, like the Greek actress, Mary Kallerghi. The Greek police say she was recruited for this work after she became the mistress of the Paris correspondent of an Athens daily and an old Communist supporter, Panayotis Dimitrakareas. In Paris, too, is Miltiades Porphyrogenis, member of the Greek Politbureau, and allegedly responsible for arranging the supply of funds for Greece.

The First Arrest

But at the time, the Greek police knew nothing of these things. They were aware only that the Cominform was curiously well-informed on Greek affairs and that mysterious Communist organisers were active in their midst.

One of these organisers was Nicholas Beloyannis, a Central Committee member. He had served at Red guerrilla headquarters in 1947, escaped abroad with the other leaders when the revolt collapsed in 1949, and returned secretly to Greece in July 1950 with instructions to supervise the reorganisation of the party's clandestine work. He came, the police believe, on a faked South American passport. Like other emissaries from outside, his first step was to contact the Vavoudis network. It was they who found him 'safe' lodgings in the city, provided him with money, filed his messages to Bucharest and delivered, in return, answers and instructions. But though Beloyannis was senior to Vavoudis in party rank, his arrival was not welcome to the network's chief. Vavoudis became jealous of his interference and began to signal back complaints. Even Beloyannis's love life did not escape a caustic comment. Later that year, when Beloyannis and one of the girl members of the network, Elli Ioannides, were arrested, Vavoudis bluntly signalled 'Ioannides is pregnant by Beloyannis. I have in my possession some of her letters to Beloyannis about love.'

The arrest of Beloyannis in December 1950 left the network still intact. Neither the Central Committee member nor his mistress talked, and Vavoudis foresaw no sign of the disaster which lay ahead. But now at last the authorities were on his track.

Locating the Stations

The first hard clue came when, in the summer of 1950, Greek army radio technicians picked up unregistered transmitters in the Athens area. 'Radio location showed us,' Major Kafiris, the communications expert in charge told me, 'that these stations were working regular schedules with a station behind the iron curtain. It placed that station at Bucharest. We then started a systematic search.' Mobile location cars and a unit of the Greek fleet were called in to pinpoint the clandestine transmitters. Meanwhile the messages, coded in a five-figure cypher, were regularly monitored and filed. Experts failed to break the cypher, and the files grew bulky with unintelligible signals.

For seventeen months the radio-location men struggled with the problem of finding the exact spots from which the messages were being sent. Their task was complicated by the fact that sometimes the Villa Avra, sometimes Lycurgus Street, was on the air, but very rarely both. In the autumn of 1951, however, they reported that they were closing in on their two targets. The Villa Avra was working at the time, signalling regularly every morning. After long and careful checking, intelligence and police officers agreed that the time had come to strike. They decided to raid both houses simultaneously and to choose a time when the Villa Avra Station was

actually transmitting so as to make sure of capturing the operator.

But, at this point, the sequence of the story is broken by an unforeseen event. Information, apparently quite unconnected with radio transmitters, had reached the police at the port of Piraeus that large-scale smuggling of gold and dollars was taking place. One ship's steward was arrested carrying British sovereigns. Investigations followed and showed evidence pointing unmistakably at the lawyer Batsis. The police began to have him shadowed. But Batsis noticed that he was under observation, and to prevent him disappearing, he was arrested on 23 October.

The Round-up

With the arrest of his chief financial go-between, Vavoudis realised that his whole network might be in danger. He closed down the Villa Avra station and moved to the greater safety of the crypt at Lycurgus Street. The move was promptly noted by the radio location men who reported that Lycurgus Street was now coming on the air with regular schedules shortly after midnight.

The police changed their plans. Shortly after one a.m. on the night of 13/14 November, strong detachments surrounded both houses. At the Villa Avra everything went smoothly. Arghyriades and his mistress were found asleep in bed, and promptly betrayed the secret entrance to the cellar. The two transmitters were found intact. Meanwhile, at Lycurgus Street, Vavoudis was busy sending the night's signals from his crypt. When the first policeman entered No. 39, he promptly broke off in the middle of a group of figures and switched out all his lights. The Kaloumenos family were arrested and stoutly denied all knowledge of transmitters or secret hide-outs. 'If you tear this house down brick by brick', said the old carpenter defiantly, 'you will find nothing here.' His wife and children also refused to talk.

For the next thirty-six hours, policemen, soldiers and communications experts searched the house. They found a number of minor hiding places used for messages, a concealed cupboard behind a wall, but still no sign of the main crypt. A mine detection squad swept the yard behind the house. Metal was located at a point some yards from the back entrance to the house. A shaft was sunk there but revealed only some iron piping leading to a cesspit. Again the mine detector swept the yard. This time persistent signals came from a spot immediately below the kitchen steps. Beside the steps, a small piece of mortar was dislodged; it revealed a round hole, about the size of a golf ball, leading to a dark, hollow space. 'Come out of there, we've found you,' shouted the officer in charge. Vavoudis replied 'I won't come out. I'm armed with three revolvers and I've plenty of ammunition. If anyone comes near I'll shoot.'

For three more hours, police and army officers tried every way of coaxing Vavoudis to surrender, meanwhile searching for a way to open up the crypt without precipitating his suicide. The Minister of the Interior, Constantine Rendis himself, was sent for, and arrived with a squad of Greek and foreign pressmen who watched what followed. The Minister promised Vavoudis he would be well treated after his arrest. But when Vavoudis demanded assurance that his life would, under all circumstances, be spared, the Minister would only answer 'That will depend on you.'

Finally, Vavoudis asked for a few more moments to think things over. His request was granted and the police again halted their efforts to force an entrance. There was a brief silence inside the crypt. Then a small wisp of smoke curled from a chimney above the kitchen roof. Vavoudis had started to burn incriminating papers. A policeman dashed to pour water down the chimney. The smoke died out. Then there were two sharp reports followed by a final silence. The prisoner in the crypt had put a revolver to his head and fired.

The Evidence

Three months later the trial opened before the Athens permanent court martial in Venizelos Street. The charge was espionage. On eight rows of benches in the centre of the Court sat twenty-nine

prisoners. The thirtieth was absent. Vavoudis had died, without regaining consciousness, after he was lifted from the crypt.

His place as chief defendant was taken by Nicholas Beloyannis, the Central Committee member who had once given Vavoudis orders. It was a rôle which Beloyannis understood. Already sentenced to death on a charge of subversive activities against the State after his arrest in 1950, his execution had been indefinitely postponed. Now, with the eyes of a new court on him, he determined to maintain his revolutionary record. He sat, laughing and joking with his companions, reading a book of English lyric poets or sniffing a red carnation, apparently indifferent to the proceedings. Then, when his turn came to speak, he lectured the judges on Communist policy and bluntly denied that Communists were spies. 'If we were traitors, we should cease to exist as a party,' he boasted. 'Yet despite all the persecution and slaughter our influence is growing. . .'

His former mistress, Elli Ioannides, followed his example, flatly rejecting all charges, refusing to answer any questions, and expounding the Party line. And in her last statement she demanded that if the court sentenced her to death, then, like other prisoners, she should be shot. The fact that she was a woman was irrelevant, she said, and she did not ask for mercy.

But others told a different story. The lawyer Demetrios Batsis claimed that he had never known the real purpose of Vavoudis's work. He begged forgiveness, insisted he had helped the police in their investigations, and offered to volunteer for immediate service on the Korean front.

Arghyriades, Vavoudis's assistant at the Villa Avra, also pleaded ignorance of the network's purpose. 'I knew nothing about spying,' he said. 'I knew only that we were in contact with the Politbureau.' And, he added, 'I wanted to be a simple party member, not to get mixed up in work like that.' But he feared to quit when Vavoudis threatened him, he claimed. 'He even made me cry,' he said.

A similar story was told by Kaloumenos, the old carpenter of Lycurgus Street. 'I was terrorised by Vavoudis. He threatened to kill us all . . . he was the master in my house . . . even at the last moment I was afraid he would kill my children.' And the eldest of the children, Margaret, added her account of the fear inspired by their 'satanic' guest.

Of the twenty-nine defendants, twenty-one claimed they were neither Communists nor spies but had been used as mere cat's-paws by the Party. Four others said they had not understood the implications of their work and asked the court for mercy, and the remaining four, like Beloyannis, defiantly defended the party and all its actions. Though their reactions were so varied, not one of the prisoners questioned the main facts on which the case was based. These facts had been established partly during interrogations of the prisoners themselves, but mostly from a mass of documentary evidence discovered in the transmitter stations. Five code books were found undamaged, and with their help, experts were able to decipher all the signals monitored since 1950. Others were found unciphered in Vavoudis's crypt. Altogether, over three hundred signals were published. A few others were withheld by the Greek Government on security grounds.

Later, Radio Free Greece and Communists elsewhere in Europe denounced the signals as forgeries. They said that the whole trial was a frame-up and added, incidentally, that Arghyriades was a police agent. But the defendants themselves made no such claims. In court, the validity of the signals went unchallenged.

The News Agency

How had so much incriminating evidence come to be found? 'Technically, the Communists, and especially Vavoudis, made big mistakes.' The police chief, John Panopoulos, told me 'the biggest was to keep code books and records in their crypts without facilities for their immediate destruction. That's something a really efficient agent would never do. But Vavoudis was over-confident perhaps.'

The contents of the Villa Avra cellar were unguarded when the police arrived, and at Lycurgus Street, for the first thirty-six hours of the raid, Vavoudis did not

care to start burning papers in the dark and airless crypt for fear of revealing its location to the searchers. If he had, he would soon have been stifled by the smoke. Only after he had decided to shoot himself did he begin to set light to whatever he could lay his hands on. But then it was too late.

The three hundred signals published at the trial revealed, in great detail, the triple mission of the Vavoudis network—to supply news to Cominform headquarters, to receive directives, and to spy.

As a 'news agency' (Vavoudis himself called it that), the network relied partly on the Athens Press, partly on party members and partly on paid informers. The information bulletins signalled to Bucharest included comments on topical political events, details of strikes and other signs of social unrest, and a weekly survey (which Elias Arghyriades regularly checked in Athens) of prices, exchange rates and the cost of living index.

For example: 'Week's chief feature' began Vavoudis's bulletin of 17 December 1950, 'is violent Anti-Communist hysteria. War preparations and oppression growing. Arrest of ten demonstrators and trials for sabotage are obvious provocation (i.e. by the Greek government). War preparations caused panic to populations of Macedonia, Epirus, even Thessaly. Athens completely panicked. Everyone hoarding sovereigns. On December 8th Bank (of Greece) sold ninety thousand sovereigns owing to Truman's statement on use of (atom) bomb, etc. Palace and Americans preparing new Government. . . .'

The Use of Fellow Travellers

But it was the second section of the network's mission which caused the biggest sensation in Athens when it was revealed. As a channel for transmitting orders from the Cominform to its agents inside Greece, it handled detailed instructions on how to use fellow travellers and 'front' organisations as well as routine guidance on internal Communist Party organisation.

Nearly one hundred of the published signals cover the efforts of Beloyannis and other representatives of the Greek Politbureau to create, penetrate, and control a new legal Left Wing Party, the 'United Democratic Left', known by its Greek initials, EDA. These efforts were most successful. EDA fought the parliamentary elections of September 1951 on a platform dictated by the Communist leaders behind the Iron Curtain and transmitted via the Vavoudis network. 'The programme of EDA is clear.' They signalled on 8 August, 'democracy, common liberty and the rest you already know . . . our broadcasts (from Radio Free Greece) will keep you oriented. EDA must understand that if it does not accept our proposals we shall openly denounce it. . . .' Even EDA's list of candidates was drawn up by the Communist Party. On 11 August, Vavoudis sent back this answer from one of the Politbureau's chief agents in Athens: 'EDA's slogan is peace—democracy—amnesty. I have fixed their lines and told them to amend their programme and to put up candidates we indicate, choosing prisoners and exiles. I threatened we would attack anyone who goes against the people.' Ten of the EDA candidates were, in fact, elected, and all ten were Communists gaoled or exiled by the Greek Government and selected as candidates by the Politbureau. Seven of these men returned from exile on 9 November while their right to sit in parliament was discussed. Five days earlier, the Politbureau's agent had signalled 'The exiled members are arriving. I have arranged for them to be briefed and to take control of the EDA newspapers. When that is done, is my mission ended?'

Military Espionage

The network's third duty, espionage, was the reason why the trial was held before the Athens permanent court martial. By Greek law, no civil court is competent to try that crime. Legally, the defendants' other activities were of no interest to the judges: they were concerned only with spying. But on that score alone, the published signals contained ample data.

On 17 December 1950, it reported 'On small islands between Rhodes and Turkish coast big installations for Superforts and submarines. Underground tunnels and depots. Only Turkish labour

under American supervision.' On 24 June 1951, it signalled 'At Goudi the ammunition depots are four metres below ground. Five kilometres south-east of Megara opposite Pagia island is a hill in which many separate explosive depots have been dug. Between Magara and the hill is an airfield where training aircraft land.' And a message of 7 June read in part 'Armoured units located at following points. Volos 393 regiment. At Aminteon. Two regiments at Salonica and at Menidi near Athens. At Philadelphia (an Athens suburb) is a unit called Armoured Assault Squadron. . . . ' It was for being concerned in sending information of this kind that the twenty-nine prisoners were formally charged with espionage against the Greek armed forces and the external security of Greece.

The Sentences

By the morning of 1 March, the court's work was done. The prisoners made their final statements and were led away under heavy escort. Then the court-room was cleared and the judges withdrew. Four hours later, Colonel John Simos led his colleagues back on to the raised wooden dais. A squad of soldiers presented arms. Spectators and lawyers stood as the colonel read out the verdict. But the prisoners were absent. By Greek custom, they would hear their sentences later in their cells. Eight were condemned to death, including Nicholas Beloyannis and his mistress Elli Ioannides, Elias Arghyriades of the Villa Avra, the carpenter Kaloumenos and the lawyer Batsis. Four received life sentences. Ten got prison terms of from one to twenty years. The remaining seven were freed.

It Still Goes On

But the story of the Vavoudis network is not yet ended. Even when the Greek Government has decided which, if any, of the sentences to commute by royal pardon (eight appeals are now lodged with the Council of Pardons), there will still be unsolved problems.

'Our job has only started,' an Army Intelligence chief told me. 'We know that many of Vavoudis's associates are still at large. We are on the track of some but others we can't yet trace. Somewhere in Athens, too, are the network's three reserve transmitters, perhaps already signalling to Bucharest.' And he added 'even when we've cleaned them up, there's still the rest of the Red underground in Greece. The Vavoudis Network, after all, was only one section of it, even if it was the most important.' For the police and Intelligence Officers concerned, the routine job of hunting the remaining Cominform agents inside Greece, though it may be slow and difficult, is at least straightforward. But the problem facing Greek statesmen and their advisors is far more complex. Today, two years after the end of the guerrilla war, their aim is to pacify and reunite their people, to win back as useful citizens some twenty thousand prisoners and exiles misled by the Reds, and to demonstrate that victorious democracy can be generous as well as strong. But how can these things be done when their enemy refuses to accept defeat? For the Cominform the Cold War in Greece today is just as bitter a struggle as the guerrilla war two years ago. And Greece is not its only battle-ground. Throughout the free world, Communism hides a double identity. While claiming the privileges of a national political party in each country, its leaders form the shock troops of an international conspiracy which knows no frontiers, recognises no laws, and gives no allegiance other than to Moscow. If final proof were needed that this is so, it can be found in the case of the Vavoudis Network. That case has served as a reminder to the free nations of the great dilemma they still face: how to preserve democracy without allowing its privileges to be misused by those who work for its destruction. The answer is still not clear.

'The spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy and oppressive'—GIBBON

The Attack on Monopoly

DERYCK ABEL

AFTER the victory in Bismarckian Germany in 1879 of the Protectionists and the mercantilist school of Friedrich List over the libertarian school of Adam Smith, 'monopoly capitalism'—the growth of cartels and syndicates—was deliberately fostered, under the influence of Socialist theorists like Sombart, as an instrument of German public policy. In 1897, the Supreme Court of the Empire at Leipzig went so far as to pronounce cartels to be 'a step serving the best interests of the country as a whole.' The industrial Germany of the Hohenzollerns became a model for collectivist thinkers elsewhere, including Great Britain. They, in turn, assiduously promoted the fallacy that monopoly is 'inherent' in technological advance and an 'inevitable' consequence of the march of economic progress.

Professor F. A. Hayek, writing in *The Road to Serfdom*, published in 1944, struck at the root of the matter. He vigorously rebutted this specious argument. Like Walter Lippmann in *The Good Society* (1937), he contended that monopoly is, on the contrary, inherent, in given conditions, in the structure of the law, and can, therefore, be countered by law reform.

> 'How little there was of inevitability in all this,' he wrote, 'and how much is the result of deliberate policy, becomes clear when we consider the position in this country till 1931 and the development since that year in which Great Britain also embarked under a policy of general Protection [through the Abnormal Importations Act, the Horticultural Produce Act, and, above all, the Import Duties Act and the Ottawa Agreements Act]. It is only a dozen years since, except for a dozen industries which had obtained Protection earlier, British industry was on the whole as competitive as, perhaps, at any time in its history. And, although during the 1920's it suffered severely from incompatible policies followed with regard to wages and to money, at least the years till 1929 compare with regard to employment and general activity not unfavourably with the 1930's. It is only since the transition to Protection and the general change in British economic policy accompanying it that the growth of monopolies has proceeded at an amazing rate and has transformed British industry to an extent the public has scarcely yet realised.' (Pages 34–5.)

Likewise Mr. Walter Lippmann:

> 'An indispensable principle of liberal policy is to outlaw monopoly and the unfair trade practices which lead to monopoly. There is a rather general impression that all business tends towards a condition of monopoly, and that may be true in a society which is drifting without a clear conception of the nature of its own economy. But once men take seriously the idea that they are committed to a mode of production which can be regulated only in free markets, they will re-examine the lines under which monopoly flourishes. They will find, I am convinced, that few effective monopolies have ever been organised and that none can long endure except where there is a legal privilege. It may be a franchise, or the exclusive possession of a limited natural product, or a patent, or a tariff, or simply an exploitation of the corporate device. But if monopoly depends upon a privilege that the law concedes, then monopoly can be destroyed and prevented by changing the law.' (*The Good Society*, pages 222–3.)

The Tariff is the Mother of Trusts

Thus the attack on monopoly is two-forked: first, and much more fundamentally, the establishment of a free market economy and all that it implies; secondly, as a supplementary, and, on the whole, subsidiary policy, trust-busting laws. To Havemeyer, who opined that 'corporations are not in business for their health', we usually attribute the famous American slogan, 'The Tariff is the mother of Trusts.' In our own country we have not yet produced anything quite equal to the classic case cited by the late Oswald Garrison Villard in *Free Trade: Free World* (1947): 'Secretary Andrew Mellon sat in the Cabinet of the United States while every American man and woman who had to buy an aluminium utensil of any kind paid tribute to Mr. Mellon's Aluminium Trust. . . . In 1922 Congress raised the aluminium duty for this Secretary of the Treasury from two to five cents per pound, and Mr. Mellon immediately raised the price of that metal by just three cents per pound.' (Pages 37–8.) Even so, the Import Duties Act of 1932 is directly responsible for accelerating the tendency towards private monopolies and price-rings, and, naturally enough, for strengthening the agitation, on the Left, for nationalisation—an agitation which the depredations of private monopolies were almost bound to inflame.

The Morrison Monopoly Act

That a monopoly-busting programme requires a tariff-busting programme is incontrovertible. In the present condition of the British economy, tariff-busting is itself the corollary to a double-pronged attack on inflationary pressure and on exchange control. The restoration of sterling convertibility is the prelude to the onslaught on the tariff structure and the quota system.

It is against such a background that we must consider the post-war anti-monopoly movement in the United Kingdom, notably, first, Mr. Herbert Morrison's *Monopoly, (Inquiry and Control) Act of 1948*; secondly, the brochure, *Monopoly*, published in 1948 over the Conservative Party's imprint, by Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, Q.C., M.P., now Home Secretary. Both lean, albeit rather lightly, on the Report on *Monopoly*, issued three years earlier by a Liberal Committee presided over by Sir Arthur Comyns Carr, Q.C.

The Morrison Monopoly Act is open, as it stands, to severe criticism on the following grounds. First, it accords no power to prevent monopolistic expansion by limiting sales or amalgamations of undertakings. Secondly, excepting an imprecise 'one-third' rule in three clauses, it offers the Monopolies Commission no guidance as to what forms 'the public interest'. Thirdly, it has no criminal sanctions. Fourthly, it implies yet another spate of delegated legislation and endows eight Government Departments with a further wide range of discretionary powers at variance with the rule of law.

It would, of course, be inappropriate to criticise the Act for its omission of trade union restrictive practices within (and without) statutory nationalised industries. They may well require entirely different techniques and treatment through the agency of a Labour Practices Commission. Four years ago, Mr. Arthur Seldon aptly depicted the grave potentialities of this aspect of the problem in *Store*, a magazine of retailing:

> 'Even if restricted practices operating against the general interest are found by the inquiries for which the (Monopoly) Bill provides, it will be exceedingly difficult for the Government to liquidate a monopoly which enables monopolies to pay higher wages. It is not solely a question of removing the swag from one of the gangsters if his partner loses his share. Industrial swag, like peace, may be indivisible. This is perhaps the greatest weakness, not so much of the Bill, but of any attempt by a Government resting on Trade Union support to cleanse industry of its canker of monopoly.'

To revert: the Morrison Act and the Maxwell Fyfe proposals are very similar in their approach to the vexed question of publicity. The Monopolies Commission may decide, under Clause 8, the extent, if any, to which its own sittings may be held in public. The Board of Trade, under Clause 9, may lay before Parliament so much of the Commission's Report as, in

its opinion, can be made public without harm to the public interest. The Maxwell Fyfe proposals (page 52) are precisely those of Clauses 8 and 9. This attitude of mind has its dangers. Surely publicity is among the most powerful weapons of the monopoly-buster! It must, none the less, be said to Sir David's credit that he admits (page 53): 'In some cases, prices could be forced down by the abolition of import duties.'

The main principles of the attack on monopoly require no elaborate statement. First, Free Trade and early cessation of controls. Secondly, the commercial code must needs be cleansed of its monopoly-promoting facilities, and in particular, abuses in the patent law and the law on trade-marks must be redressed. Thirdly, Government must itself eschew monopolistic activities; it must maintain the double principle that, given some measure of public accountability, 'technically inevitable' or 'natural' monopolies need not necessarily be nationalised and may be left in private hands, and that a short-lived private monopoly is less intolerable than a long-lived subsidised public monopoly. Fourthly, the Monopolies Commission must be reconstituted; it needs teeth; it must be given a framework like that of the United States Federal Trade Commission and powers like those enjoyed by the Combines Investigation Commissioner in Canada. Slaying monopoly can never be painless, but this must be the programme for the crusade against those of whom Edward Gibbon wrote:

> 'The spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy and oppressive; their work is more costly and less productive than that of independent artists; and the new improvements so easily grasped by the competition of freedom are admitted with slow and sullen reluctance in those proud corporations, above the fear of a rival and below the confession of an error.'

Icarus

There were trees there; this, this is the sky;
Look, son! behind us the green green earth,
The grey string a road and the red patches
Roofs over men's heads; hold, son, we're climbing.

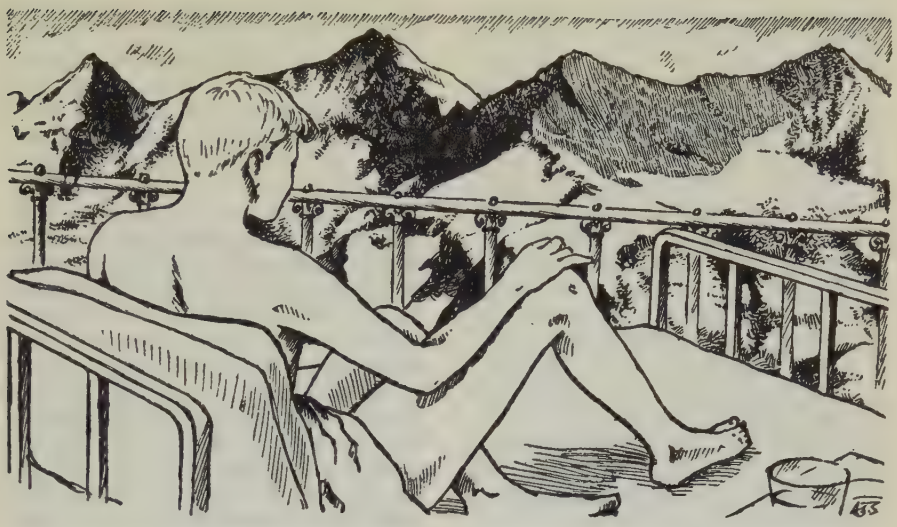
This is a cloud, son, smell the electric
Charges; that pain there is your lungs wanting
Air; ah! did you catch the rainbow
Ring at the cloud's edge? Glide, son, glide.

There's the sea and—no, not signals,
That's the sun's eye chucked back up
By a dancing wave; the black spot a boat and
Men fishing; watch how your shadow wakes them.

Steady, son, steady; you'll find we call this
All horizons, a damned great engagement ring,
Yourself the centre you can't skip out of;
Don't be fright, son, it's a manner of speaking.

I see you're tired, son; you can't fly back;
Air's all used, wings melting and the sea beneath;
Now for the fall; what's that? What's it all for?
Search me, son, but it's a damn fine journey.

JEREMY BROOKS



Life is dull in a sanatorium and one patient Brambilla passed the time teasing his young room-mate Girolamo. In the hope of impressing him, Girolamo seduced Polly, a little English girl, but Brambilla is discharged cured and Polly has a relapse

A Sick Man's Winter

ALBERTO MORAVIA

PART II

Everything that the nurse had said in that dark and disgusted tone of voice about his little friend now came back to him with an intensity peculiar to all feverish conditions. The thought that Polly had been delirious all night long, at first filled him with a wild and bitter remorse. He imagined the little girl as he had seen her so often, white and motionless beneath the low light of the lamp. He seemed to sense a connection between that fixed look of terror he had so often surprised in her blue eyes, and the delirium, followed by the confession and the scandal and her mother's intervention. 'Obviously,' he thought, 'she had an immense respect for me, a kind of admiration, although she never told me so, and it's for this reason that she let me act as I did without making a protest, without even daring to breathe, but then, what happened filled her with shame and fear. Later she never stopped thinking about it and, finally, after being delirious all night, as soon as she saw her mother she could no longer restrain herself and confessed everything in a burst of tears. . . . ' Thinking this suddenly made him realise that his little friend had ranged herself against him with Brambilla and Joseph, and was justified in doing so. 'I'm alone,' he thought once more. 'Nobody will have anything to do with me ever again.'

The unexpected entry of the maid with the supper-tray made him sit up and turn on the light. The woman was dark, small but sturdy, and not unattractive, though she had an unusual characteristic: her forearms, cheeks, upper lip and even her neck were covered with a growth of dark downy hair that made one think she must have a tremendously hairy body. She first put

the tray down on the table, and then, still without uttering a word, she began to strip Brambilla's bed. Usually, whenever she came into the room, she would chat with the boy and most of all with Brambilla, who was particularly attracted by her hairiness. Girolamo, who had always thought of her as too forward and a little cheap, now resented her ostentatious coldness which he took for reproach and condemnation. 'She knows everything too,' he thought in despair, 'and she despises me the same as all the others.' Now the whole of his being was bent on obtaining from this woman some small sign of pity or respect. He longed to say something or do something that would have won her over, but he had only to look at that face, bent over the heap of linen in the corner of the room, to feel himself incapable of so much as opening his mouth.

But, just as she was about to leave, he managed to overcome his shyness: 'Tell me,' he asked with an effort, 'How is Miss Polly?'

The woman, with the linen bundled under her arm, was already by the door.

'What, you?—you, of all people,' she burst out violently, 'dare to ask me a question like that? What cheek!' she added with a sarcastic laugh. 'First the fellow does the damage and then, without turning a hair, he asks after her health.'

There was a moment of silence. Girolamo felt even his ears burning.

'Miss Polly's better,' the nurse concluded drily. 'Is there anything else?'

'And the doctor,' Girolamo went on, 'When is he coming to see me?'

'Tomorrow morning—and then you'll have to face the music! Anything else?'

'But why?' insisted Girolamo, who had suddenly turned pale, 'What do you mean . . . face the music?'

The woman gave him a sidelong glance. She herself did not know what she had meant by those words, nor what the doctor would decide the following day, but in her genuine indignation, no condemnation seemed strong enough.

'What it means,' she said, 'is that after what you've done, the doctor might send you away. Anything else?'

'Take my supper away,' said the boy, in a final attempt to move the woman to pity by refusing his food. 'I can't eat tonight.'

Once more she laughed sarcastically: 'Now don't go and play the martyr. Eat your food. Anyway, even if you don't eat, it won't make Miss Polly any the better! What more can I do for you?'

'Nothing.'

The door shut. For a moment Girolamo remained in the same position, sitting up in bed, then, without touching the food on the tray, he curled up again under the blankets with his face turned towards the window. His thoughts were confused; he believed it was all up with him. 'Send me away,' he thought, 'the doctor will send me away'; and although he was convinced that he deserved this punishment, the prospect of it filled him with unspeakable dismay. He knew what a sacrifice his family had made to send him to the sanatorium; and in the intensity of fever, he seemed to see, stage by stage, everything that would take place: his departure, the arrival at home, his mother's tears, his father's reproaches; in short, all those reactions so painful and humiliating that such an event would produce in a family like his, a family which already found it difficult to make ends meet. And through certain childish scruples, quite unrelated to reality, he felt he owed them a boundless debt of gratitude.

He was deeply agitated by these thoughts, as though the doctor were already there ordering him to leave, and he began to toss and turn beneath the bedclothes and to shake his head. 'No, not this,' he thought, as he writhed, 'anything but this.' He did not admit it to himself but what made him suffer most in the face of this bitter prospect was the loss of his parents' esteem and affection. Never having made any distinction between them and the people at the sanatorium, Girolamo was certain that, as soon as they knew the truth, they too would despise him, like everyone else; and with terror he imagined his life at home, ill and despised, a source of endless displeasure and trouble, with little hope of recovery and no hope whatsoever of happiness.

'Anything but this,' he repeated over and over again, 'anything but this!'

He was very tired and suddenly was overcome by a great desire to sleep, to forget everything, and to sink into oblivion. He put out the light and five minutes later was sound asleep. But at once he began to have confused dreams. He was lying on his iron bedstead in a large empty room with grey bare walls. In the middle was a table of carved wood, and leaning against it nonchalantly was a man, still young: his father. They were talking quietly and his father told him that he no longer had enough money to keep him at the sanatorium. He did not appear irritated and annoyed; he was smiling resignedly. Girolamo agreed with his father; obviously if there was no more money, it was no longer possible to continue the treatment, but he was thinking, thinking hard, in an effort to find a way out, and suddenly he thought he had found one—'I'll marry Polly!' he exclaimed. This suggestion met with his father's approval; and now the little English girl must be told the news. Girolamo's father left the table and wheeled his son's bed out of the room. Now they were in the dark corridor of the sanatorium. The father had difficulty in guiding the bed; he was not as skilful as Joseph and, besides, the black corridor was full of white beds being wheeled in every direction by male and female nurses. Another thing that slowed down their progress was the endless stopping in front of innumerable shops which somehow or other had their blazing and dazzling windows on either side of the corridor. These shops were really magnificent. In the windows that were as deep as caves, displayed in a blaze of light were rare objects of gold and other precious metals and small trinkets, gorgeous raiments, bronzes and weapons. Girolamo gazed at all these beautiful things. He suddenly thought of giving his future wife a surprise by actually bringing her a complete trousseau—no sooner said than done! The father went into a shop and came out a moment later with a wonderful wedding dress all white and gleaming with a long and billowing veil, and a train; from another shop he brought back a wreath of orange blossom, and from yet another, more garments. Everything was placed on Girolamo's bed; the wedding dress with all its veils made a splash of almost blinding light in the surrounding darkness. They went on along the corridor and at last reached the lift that was to take them to the first floor. Now they were in it; the lift began to descend. But it seemed to take longer than usual, and the electric buzz sounded louder and more persistent. As Girolamo looked at the bridal gown at the foot of his bed, an absurd anguish oppressed him: 'Stop, stop!' he kept on saying, 'We've got to stop!' but the lift kept on going down, the buzzing grew louder and louder, then became a howl . . . and at this point the dream was shattered and the boy woke up.

The darkness of his room filled his wide-open eyes, but the howling he had heard in the dream went on and on until it seemed to fill each little nook of silence. At first, still very sleepy, he could not understand what it was, then, not far from his room, a noise of footsteps hurrying down the wooden stairs of the sanatorium, as though people were running away, suddenly made him realise what it was: 'It's the siren in the tower, the fire-alarm,' he thought. 'The sanatorium is on fire and that noise—it's the nurses running away.'

Hurriedly he turned on the light. At that moment with the wailing siren sounding through the air and the clatter of footsteps down the stairs, the isolation of his room appeared terrifying. 'The sanatorium is built almost entirely of wood,' he thought, 'And it'll burn in a flash . . . and there's only one lift and that can hold only one bed at a time . . . and there are over eighty beds.' While he was working all this out, he was watching the door; the siren sounded louder and the stairs still clattered with footsteps. Suddenly, although he knew very well that with his leg attached to the pulley, he would not be able to free himself, he began to twist and turn in his bed. The pulley squeaked and the bed groaned. Then, trying another method, he used all his strength to move the bed towards the door; but the bed would not move. 'I shall have to stay here,' he thought at last, dropping back on to his pillow, more in anger than in fear, 'Tied by one foot . . . in this trap, waiting for death. . . .' It seemed to him that this sort of death would be the final injustice

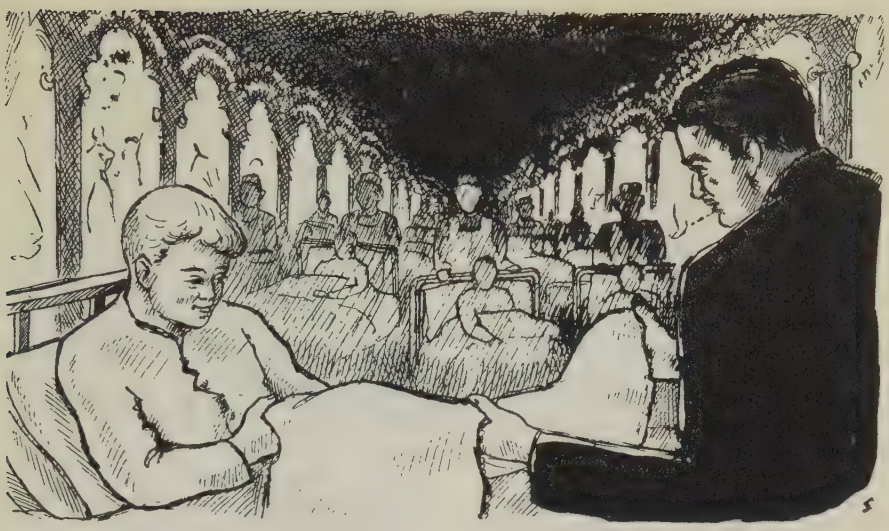
after a chain of undeserved misfortunes. Suddenly he was seized with rage against the fate which struck at him while others went scot-free: 'Damn it,' he muttered, looking around, white in the face, trembling and grinding his teeth with a passion to bite and wound and revenge himself for all his suffering now that he was at death's door. 'Damn it, damn the sanatorium, damn Polly, damn the doctors. . . .' His eyes fell on the supper-tray and its plates of cold food. He leaned forward and pushed it off the table. There was a crash of broken china; then he threw down the ink-pot and everything else he could lay his hands on, and did not stop until he was tired out and there was nothing left to destroy.

Then he noticed with astonishment that the wailing of the siren and the clatter on the stairs had stopped, and that neither the crackling of fire, nor flame, nor smoke, nor indeed any of the terrifying signs of conflagration had come to disturb the isolation of his room. Suddenly the truth dawned on him: in all probability a haystack had caught fire, and those people who'd been running down the stairs were not running away, but only hurrying to enjoy the unusual sight of a fire in the snow, in the heart of a winter's night.

He was so relieved that his eyes filled with tears; seeing the broken plates on the floor, he recalled his contortions and curses of a moment ago, and was overcome by a sudden unbearable shame. To have gone so far in that moment of panic as to curse the little girl whom he knew he had wronged, appeared to him the clearest sign of the depths to which he'd sunk. 'I deserved to die!' he thought with conviction. Full of remorse and good intentions, he wished he was able to walk so that he might get up at once and go to Polly and ask her forgiveness. For a moment he thought of making a solemn promise to marry her as soon as she was grown up, but obviously this was absurd. He was the lowest of all men and the most evil; and so the idea of being expelled from the sanatorium the next day no longer frightened him, but even gave him a sense of relief. 'I do deserve it!' he thought. Now that the humiliation and contempt which were in store for him seemed desirable, he was pleased to imagine that his punishment would be just, and he believed that, through these new sufferings, he would manage at last to free himself from the black despair that had weighed on him ever since that evening when he kissed Polly for the first time. After that, his mind would be at ease, and he could concentrate on getting well. The belief that the following day he would be punished severely and justly filled him with hope and peace. He shut his eyes, very like a child who after a fright or a fit of temper falls asleep in its mother's arms. And he fell asleep.

He was awakened in the morning by a shaft of sunlight, not warm but extraordinarily clear and bright, slanting through the window and falling on the bed. He opened his eyes, and his first thought was of joy at the fine day. 'What a wonderful blue sky!' he thought, looking at the window, 'at last I can lie in the sun and get well.' And he was beginning to wonder why no one had come to wake him up and put him out on the terrace, when, from the room next door, he heard the sound of men talking. One voice, loud and confident, was asking questions and giving orders, while the others sounded submissive and deferential. 'The director!' he guessed at once and the thought petrified him; 'he's already next door and he'll be here in a minute.'

Every aspect of his awful situation came home to him; the little girl, the scandal already spreading, his imminent dismissal from the sanatorium . . . and for a moment anguish and terror overwhelmed him. 'He'll be here in a minute,' he thought, 'and I haven't washed, or combed my hair. The whole room's in a mess and there's a terrible fug.' He wanted to clear up but he didn't know where to begin. Then his startled gaze fell on the floor and there, between the two beds, he caught sight of the tray, and the broken plates, and among the fragments, the food caked on the dark polished floor. 'To think I'd forgotten . . .' For a moment he hesitated and then leant forward with the hope of hiding the mess under the bed. The door opened and, followed by his assistant and Joseph, the director came in. This man who terrified Girolamo, and likewise, though for quite different reasons, the whole of the medical staff from his assistant down to



the lowest nurse, was fairly typical of a certain kind of modern doctor. He was not so much a man of learning as an expert and calculating manipulator, both of his own gifts, and of the immense gullibility of the sick. A good surgeon, if lacking distinction, but above all endowed with a fine intuition of the psychologically expedient, the sight of cowardice in the face of pain together with a real experience of the ignorance and incompetence of doctors, had filled him from his early days with the greatest contempt for mankind, and he firmly believed that in order to get on in the world it was essential to have a haughty manner, a harsh, convincing tone and in fact all those external signs of authority that are generally supposed to conceal equivalent knowledge and skill. The doctor was tall and heavily built, with pale hands sparsely covered with long black hairs, a close cropped head, cold, penetrating eyes, a hooked nose, and a neat pointed beard: the appearance of a musketeer or an inquisitor. Add to all this an abrupt and commanding way of walking, talking and looking, occasional but well-timed acts of good nature and a way of laughing which made his admirers say: 'He's a hard man, of course, but what a kind laugh he has', and you will have a fairly accurate idea of the man.

As the door opened, Girolamo, who was absorbed in trying to push the remains of his supper under the bed, and was leaning out uncovered to the waist, with his hair almost touching the floor, quickly drew himself up. While keeping his eyes steadily fixed on the director who, followed by his assistant and Joseph, was approaching slowly and with almost a look of suspicion, Girolamo straightened his bedclothes and smoothed down his hair as best he could. His heart was thumping and he could hardly breathe for anxiety. Then, remembering the reason for his panic, he calmed down: 'Now he'll tell me I'm going to be sent home,' he thought and clenched his teeth. 'He's going to tell me I've done something dreadful. I'm ready to obey him, to undergo any punishment if only he'll hurry up.' Though he felt like calling out 'Hurry up, please, do hurry up!' he was just able to restrain himself and, with a flushed face, he watched the doctor and the two men come slowly towards him.

But as if determined to thwart Girolamo, the director seemed to be in no hurry at all. He came closer and, when he had reached the bedside, stood still, shaking his head ironically at the sight of the tray and the broken plates on the floor; then, looking straight at the boy, said: 'Well, young man, I've heard some fine tales about you.'

Girolamo went pale: 'This is it, now,' he thought and he wanted to cry out with misery.

'But if I have to leave,' he managed to get out at last, tremulously, 'then, oh, doctor, please send me away as soon as possible.'

The director gave him a look, 'Leave? Who told you you were going to leave?' A thick mist clouded Girolamo's eyes. 'Because of what I've done,' he stammered. 'Polly . . . the first floor.'

At last the director seemed to understand. 'Oh, that,' he exclaimed, going right up to the bed with a sign to the others to follow. 'I'm afraid you're mistaken there, my boy . . . what the patients get up to is none of our business; this is a clinic, not a reformatory. What matters to us is not your soul, but your body, and only a part of that. However, I have given orders that you are not to be taken down to the first-floor from now on. As to your leaving us, you will leave when we think fit.' And, signing to the male nurse, he added: 'Pull back those bedclothes!'

The Austrian obeyed. Lying there uncovered, Girolamo shivered. There was too much confusion in his mind for him to think anything. He was annihilated, and felt an acute sense of his utter insignificance. Meanwhile the doctor was bending over him, carefully fingering his sick knee with those thick white, stumpy hands of his; as he watched him, Girolamo felt he was no more than a lump of flesh with neither will nor intelligence.

The doctor straightened himself: 'Show me those X-rays,' he said to his assistant.

The latter was holding a sheaf of metallic envelopes. From these he drew out three photographs of Girolamo's knee and handed them to the doctor who held them up to the light to examine and compare them. The first X-ray showed, against a black background, a whitish patch formed by the rotula and the conjunction of the femur and tibia; it was clouded and deformed. In the second negative this cloudiness was smaller and surrounded by a dark outline; but in the third it was just the same as in the first, if anything, slightly worse. The doctor handed the X-rays back to his assistant and turned to the boy:

'You're no better now than when you first arrived . . . what have you got to say to that?'

'What—how do you mean?' the boy was beginning, but the older man broke in: 'you just concentrate on getting better. If I were you, I wouldn't take my illness so lightly. Now off you go for your sun-treatment. Joseph, put him out on the balcony!' and at this, without waiting for Girolamo's reply, the director and his assistant left the room.

Joseph threw open the windows, gave the boy his sun glasses and a cloth for his loins, stripped the bedclothes off him, and with his strong arms had the bed out in a moment. The boy suddenly found himself in the open air, curled up naked and self-conscious on the mattress. It was cold, and the cheerful sunlight on the terrace was only just warm enough to stop him shivering. On the dazzling sheets of the other beds brown bodies were already exposed to the sun, and even the scars, boils and abscesses that here and there disfigured those motionless limbs looked less repellent in the beautiful light of the morning. Some of the patients were reading, others lying back flat as corpses. Others again, at the far end of the terrace, had put on a gramophone, and at intervals he could hear its harsh notes carried by the wind. The day could not have been lovelier: as far as his eye could reach, he saw distinct against the hard, clear sky the ring of jagged peaks that crowned the valley; the pine forests sprinkled with fresh snow, and on the glistening slopes the little black shapes of the skiers flashing hither and thither, falling down, picking themselves up, disappearing and reappearing again from behind the white hills. But Girolamo gazed at this festive landscape with eyes full of tears. Nothing had happened. He would not see Brambilla again, nor the little English girl. He was alone; and his recovery seemed a long, long way off.

Translated by Baptista Gilliat-Smith

My Mother was the best Mother in the World

ROY COLE

THIS is a very common misapprehension, and one against which I would warn every child of three and over. Before then it does not matter very much. Afterwards it is inclined to cramp the conscience, stultify the spirit and the ecstasy of discovery and to retard the development of that mental carapace which is the only safeguard against the wrongs of life.

My mother used to sit in front of the kitchen fire with her draggled skirt drawn up to her knees reading penny novelettes. The heat made permanent red and white reticulations over her shins. Every third or fourth day she would tell me it was time I cleared the ashes out of the grate and invariably added that if I were not such a selfish little swine, totally unfitted to have been blessed by God with the best mother in the world, I would clean them out more often.

They had piled up into great black and grey heaps until they choked the firebars underneath and in front, and the fire was no more than a little red pit. I lit the fire every morning, but did not clear the ashes out until I was made to. I washed up dinner things in half a kettle of lukewarm water and then went off back to school. I had won a scholarship to a very ancient and honourable Grammar School and my headmaster hated the sight of me. I don't blame him.

I was unkempt and slovenly, the son of a slut, and my father was a weak-willed failure; a dilettante at such crafts as hawking flowers off a tray slung round his neck or fish off a home-made barrow, or opening still-born greengrocery shops in back streets—generally in a private house, because we could never afford a real shop or even a shop window front.

We never stayed in one place long—a year perhaps—long enough to run up our quota of petty debts and get into trouble with the local tradespeople. Then we would move on, sometimes by moonlight, and come to a new little town or village where we swore life should begin again; our new crack-brained venture should coin money for us and we would live like ladies and gentlemen and the sons of ladies and gentlemen as our birthright became us.

I liked and pitied my father although

the poverty we lived in was due to his fecklessness. My mother railed at him in between times when she was not telling me she was the best mother in the world, and peace would only descend upon the house on those not infrequent occasions when they both decided to sit down and write for money to their respective families. Both my grandparents and all my aunts and uncles were well-to-do.

Early in life my father had compounded, like Esau, for his inheritance and the thousand pounds or so, whatever it might have been, launched him on a flood-tide of misfortune which, in retrospect, seemed a good deal grander than the little gutter trickle he floated upon for the rest of his life.

My mother said she was a good cook, and I believe she was, only dirty. We lived on soup made from sheep's head or shin bones or some other nourishing foundation, but after we children had gone to bed of an evening, our parents, or my mother and the lodger if my father were out earning his living, would carouse on such disgusting delicacies as tripe, stewed eels, faggots, or boiled brains on toast. I never envied them this offal.

Lentil and pea soup were our favourites, with pearl-barley soup a runner-up. There seemed always to be an iron pot full of one or the other standing about on the gas stove or in the scullery or on the hob over which my mother was reading. She could read and stir, absently, at the same time.

One evening we were having our supper of lentil soup, my sister and I. There seemed rather more lentils than usual in it and, after a few spoonfuls, I decided I did not want any more. I put my spoon down quietly, guiltily, and watched my sister's hearty gormandising for a few moments. Then she, too, stopped, sensing that I had found something wrong, looked more closely at her plate and began to blubber.

The soup had been standing overnight in our vermin-ridden scullery and half the 'lentils' were little dead black beetles. My mother was furious with me for making so much fuss. They were only little beetles, she said, and would not hurt anybody.

I was a shrinking and disgusting little prig, tormented constantly by wondering why I was not happier, better behaved, more loving and helpful to the best mother in the world. I realised what a staggering favour God had vouchsafed me. To pick *me* out of all the millions of little boys in the world to give not merely a *good* mother, not *one* of the best, but *the* best—the one only best. I knew what a superlative was and that there could be only one of them.

Why I knew I was vicious, bad and wholly degenerate was because I did not like doing cheerful little errands to save her poor, hard-working fingers. I never got the joy she told me I ought to get out of washing up, lighting the fire, making cups of tea, cleaning the knives and forks, or sweeping up.

Most of all I loathed, I frantically detested, the shopping. I hated going to the coarse-faced butcher and asking for a fourpenny sheep's head or half a one for twopence, and, please, leave the brains in; or to the side door of the pub, where the ladies who had been talking would fall sourly silent at my approach, with a jug for a pint of stout.

The little old man at the newsagent's was hard of hearing and I had to raise my voice for *Yes or No*, *Christian Novels*, *Red Letter* or whatever gaudy publication the day of the week demanded.

Most horrible of all was the Sunday afternoon visit to a little back-street sweetshop where I had to buy ha'porths—in prosperous times perhaps pennyworths—of sweets which might have been pure and pleasant enough in themselves but went by such misguidedly fantastic names as 'Yankee-Doodle Toffee', 'Ally Slopers Lunches', 'Gob Stoppers', and 'Flapdoodle'. The old man who kept this non-Sabbatarian den was not just hard of hearing, like the old newsagent man; he was stone deaf, and for a few ghastly minutes the hush of the surrounding streets would be shattered by my screaming and self-conscious treble trying to register my mother's requirements on this hopeless old huckster.

His shop was the Sunday afternoon rendezvous of adolescent hobbledehoys who would stand round drinking ginger beer and jeering at the exhibitions of such as me. I never could bear to raise my voice or make myself conspicious in any way,

and this ordeal, even in far retrospect, remains one of the most dreadful I have lived through.

Only one was worse. That was pushing my father's barrow to the station through the sobriety of the Sabbath, laden with such embarrassing merchandise as boxes of herrings, old iron, flowers, or whatever else we happened to be dealing in at the time. It was a full mile, all through the long straight High Street, and although I stuffed my grammar-school cap in my pocket and hung my head, the eyes of the world were upon me in genteel Sunday scorn. I gave up going the direct way. I found a tortuous back-street route, twice as far but less frequented.

I don't remember why this infernal barrow had to be pushed on Sundays at all, but it had, and there was a sharp-voiced man at the London South Western Railway station to whom or from whom my wares had to be transferred. He always shouted at me.

Although we moved about so much, I remember this town as the real centre of my childhood because we actually remained in it no fewer than six years. I got my four years of secondary education there and learned enough to know how sweet learning might be for those who had the money to indulge in it. We came there in 1913 and took a large old-fashioned house, which my mother proposed to fill with handsome young bachelor lodgers, and my father meant to turn into a fruit shop.

It belonged to two maiden ladies who kept a stationer's shop at the top of the town, and for at least three months, by some miracle, we paid the rent. After that it became erratic, and later it used to be my business to call in on a Monday afternoon on my way to school, with a few shillings and an excuse for not paying any more. One of the old ladies was meek and frightened and never said anything; the other was tough and gave me sharp messages to take back to my defaulting parents.

Once, when the arrears of some three or four years had mounted up, she spoke to me more kindly (I was getting on for thirteen then—obviously a man of business) and told me that if I could persuade my mother to pay off twenty or thirty pounds of the debt, she would give me five pounds for myself. I was quite astonished at the misconception she seemed to be labouring under; it had never occurred to me that anyone in their wildest imaginings could suppose that we had the money and just did not want to pay. We had not got it, never did have it, and, I added, quite positively never would have it, and she might as well offer me the moon for sixpence as a discount off her bad debt.

The reason we stayed in this town so long was because of the war: the 1914–18 war, which took my father to a job in London for eighteen months and then into the Army, where he became a good groom and driver in the Royal Army Service Corps. I am sure they were the happiest years of his life.

My mother seized this freedom with considerable joy and stocked up with lodgers, billeted soldiery, and servants. She had a separation allowance and father was out of the way. She bought new clothes. She took on a local girl to help with the housework, but as she had not the faintest idea how to go about housework or tell others to go about it, nothing much happened. So she took on another girl, and as that was not effective, another. We had three girls, all standing about looking at one another and wondering what they were supposed to do. But they pretty soon left and found better jobs, except one, the prettiest, who on account of the billeted soldiery tearfully and prematurely had a baby.

After my father joined up, my mother told me I was now a man and must be a tower of strength and help to her in her loneliness and her weakness. And one of the first things I had better do would be to go round to one of the local magistrates and say that, as we were of genteel extraction and not used to living on a poor soldier's pay, we wanted an additional allowance. There was some such scheme running in that war; some means of getting a not inconsiderable quarterly grant to help those who would not be able to maintain the more serious of their peacetime commitments, and this was what I had to negotiate.

The magistrate blinked at me, a little

surprised, but he listened to me kindly, spoke to me as one man to another (he was sixty, I was eleven) and eventually my mother drew something like eighteen pounds a quarter supplementary pension as a result of my efforts. She gave me a penny.

Mysterious uncles came to tea all through the war. Uncle Billy, Uncle David, Uncle Ralph——. They were all privates or N.C.O's, and my mother spoke waspishly of the unprincipled ladies of the town who entertained officers, because everybody knew what officers were after (I didn't), and how there was no such thing as a clean platonic friendship with an officer. To be seen talking with an officer was damnation.

When I was fourteen and a half, my scholarship only half expired, I left school and became the office boy at a private hospital. Here I earned eight shillings a week, six of which went towards the housekeeping and two upon my own personal delights. I began buying little boxes of chocolates for my mother out of my two shillings to repay her in some small measure for sacrificing her life to me and for being the best mother in the world.

At the hospital I showed the first glimmerings of that initiative which was to stand me in such good stead in later life, by getting myself (I thought) out of a scrape occasioned by muddled-up letters. A little boy had died and the Medical Superintendent had written to undertaker, clergyman, florist, cemetery minder and all other keepers of the dead, about interment. I never knew what went wrong, but I ended that day's post with an envelope too many, so to make sure, I wrote a few letters myself to those I thought might be odd man out, signing them *per pro* Superintendent.

On the day of the burial, two clergymen turned up at the wrong cemetery; the parents had not learned their child was dead, the undertaker had made a man-sized coffin and the Coroner was waiting in an empty Court to hold an inquest on the Medical Superintendent, or so it seemed to me—and to the Medical Superintendent I fear.

I took a job with a big Government engineering concern after that, and before the Geddes Axe fell upon my half-completed indentures (to save the country eighteen shillings a week), I made the shocking, stunning, blinding discovery that *my mother was not the best mother in the world.*

I was lodging cheap with a fellow workman—a north countryman of homosexual tendencies with two children and a wife who nagged in the broad, whining, ugly dialect of Lancashire. One day I heard her saying to her little boy, 'Best mother in the world you've got—the very best mother in the whole wide world, and this is how you treat her!'

Once again my appreciation of the superlative led my thoughts. Here, horribly and veritably were my mother's own words, in the mouth of another mother. Yet if *this* mother was the best, *my* mother could not be the best. There were no two bests. One of them was lying; lying in exactly the same phrase, in the same self-pitying cadence, to very similar shrinking, stricken, guilt-ridden little boys. He was ten. I was sixteen.

Life was never the same after that, thank God. I shook my burden off my back in the self-same instant, and all my sins fell from me. The awful, impious thought came, stayed, grew, that I might not, after all, be the blackest devil out of hell I had all my life supposed and been encouraged to suppose, and this thought was sweet. Sweeter still the thought that I might make something of myself instead of sullenly waiting for the early hanging my mother and my schoolmaster had alike foretold.

Since that day, during thirty years in which I have known that my mother was not the best mother in the world, I have built my own world; I have been free.

Now that she is dead, I can say so. Not before.

I was never so base that I could bring myself to say in front of a person's face such things about them as can only be decently said behind their back.

The Showpiece

RALEIGH TREVELYAN

I HAD particularly wanted a quiet morning at the office. It was extremely irritating, therefore, when Major Foscarini rang up and asked me to come round 'urgently' to the Italian Army food depot in the Via Re Boris di Bulgaria. I could hear him spluttering with excitement on the other end of the line. I must come at once, he was saying; the matter was most important, urgent, *urgentissimo.*

As neither Major Foscarini nor I could completely understand the other's language, our telephone conversations were apt to end in confusion. This occasion was no exception. For my part—the day being already very hot, with a hint of *scirocco*—I was determined not to trail out to the food depot if it only meant having to cope with some routine job, like authorising a new shipment of dried beans for mules in Sardinia. The major, on the other hand, was equally determined to get me there whether I understood the reason for the journey or not. In the end he fell back on his usual tactics, which was to drown any attempt at interruption by a continuous stream of gabbling talk and then abruptly to slam down the receiver just when I thought he was in the middle of a sentence.

But it was not only because of the heat and the *scirocco* that I had wanted to be left undisturbed at the office; on that same day I had been asked out to an extremely distinguished luncheon, and I was relying on being able to slip away early so as to arrive there in plenty of time. My hostess was the Marchesa Pozzi-Bandaccio, widow of a famous explorer and hunter of big game, and herself the author of some successful volumes of memoirs. These luncheons, which she gave once a month, were a definite feature of post-war Roman society and were noted not only for the excellent food, but also for the important and interesting people one was likely to meet. My own invitation was the result of much careful wangling, as I had never before been to her house, and so naturally I was determined not to be late. Punctuality, I believed, even in Italy, was of the utmost importance for first impressions.

Gloomily I prepared to set out for the Via Re Boris di Bulgaria. Several times, during Major Foscarini's excited torrent of chatter down the telephone, I had heard him repeat two words, both of

which were outside the scope of my knowledge of Italian. Before I left the office, I searched a dictionary to see whether I could find some clue to this tedious errand. The result was baffling. The words—if I had heard them correctly—did exist; they were *derrate*, 'commodities' and *svariate*, 'variegated or changed'. I could only trust, then, that these variegated commodities would not interfere with my arriving in time at the Marchesa's.

The August sun glared down on the dust and trams of the Via Re Boris di Bulgaria. As I jogged along the cobbles in my staff car, I wondered what sort of compliment was intended for the royal dignitary after whom the street was named. At last we reached the barred windows and peeling walls of the food depot. An unshaven guard saluted incredulously on recognising the uniform of an Allied officer.

Major Foscarini, in rakish cap and polished jack-boots, was waiting for me in the narrow strip of shade outside the orderly room. He came forward jerkily, saluted, shook hands, twitched his over-anxious turkey-cock face and rolled his stained yellow eyeballs. He was full of apologies. The heat, he said vaguely, and the time of year—the *Signor Tenente* must be tolerant. It would have been unfair to the storekeepers to have waited any longer.

I decided to interrupt this beating about the bush. Would the major give me the precise reason why I had been called round so suddenly to the depot?

Major Foscarini's attitude changed at once. He became deliberately evasive. So the *Signor Tenente* did not know the English words for *derrate svariate*? Then, indeed, there was a remarkable surprise in store for him. Not many tourists, he added facetiously, would have the privilege of seeing such a sight when they visited the Eternal City.

A diminutive corporal, dressed in a British Army battledress jacket, buttoned up at the neck despite the weather, and in the grey-blue Italian regulation breeches, had been standing discreetly in the background as we talked. Major Foscarini waved him up. This, he explained to me, was Salvatore, the 'guardian' of the *derrate svariate*.

The little man was obviously delighted to become the centre of our attention. '*Si, si*, Salvatore,' he said, at the same time showing checkerboard gold and silver teeth. He snatched at my hand and shook it enthusiastically, and then, as if reminding himself of military convention, clicked his heels and saluted.

The Major and I followed Salvatore to the door of one of the store-rooms. With theatrical ceremony the bolts were drawn back. The room was very dark, in contrast to the brilliant sunshine outside. As we entered, a wave of foetid air rushed out to us—the unmistakable stench of decaying flesh in the last stages of putrefaction. Momentarily a horrid suspicion about Major Foscarini's intentions forced itself upon me. What was this place, this charnal-house, that he was luring me into? Was he, in revenge for all those acrimonious telephone calls, about to make me the victim of some sadistic and fiendish atrocity?

But when at last I caught sight of the Major's meek and suffering features, all my doubts vanished. He was holding a flowered silk handkerchief to his nose. Quickly I drew out my own. Now that my eyes had become accustomed to the light, the cause of the smell was obvious; the place was stacked high with oozing tins of decomposed bully beef, their contents turned green and slimy, occasionally tinged to an angry purple. Here and there a mildewed loaf had been flung on to the pile, or a haunch of rotting meat at which fat white maggots were greedily sucking and burrowing. These, then, were the *derrate svariate*, the 'variegated' or 'changed' commodities.

Salvatore was clambering energetically over the heaps of tins, disturbing swarms of bluebottles which rose and resettled around his feet. Every now and then he would select one of the more revolting samples and brandish it triumphantly before our faces. It was not long before Major Foscarini collapsed under his handkerchief's flimsy protection, and I followed him as he staggered back into the sunlight.

Over black coffee in the orderly room, the Major began nervously to question me. Surely I agreed that the food I had seen was bad? If so, would I please sign a document to this effect, so that he could apply

to the British authorities for a new consignment of bully beef? I gave my signature willingly. Looking at my watch, I was glad to see that there was ample time before I need even think of getting ready for the Marchesa's luncheon. I decided to go back to the mess for a wash and clean-up and then to linger a pleasant hour or so over a vermouth at Rosati's.

As I rose from my chair, Major Foscarini caught my arm. The *Signor Tenente* was not leaving? There was still a good deal more for him to do. The *derrate* had to be destroyed, burnt at a place on the outskirts of Rome, and the *Tenente* would have to act as official witness. The tins were already being loaded on to a truck for this purpose, he explained, and what was more, the *Tenente* himself must accompany the truck to make certain that none of its load was pilfered on the way.

At first I thought the Major was joking, but he insisted that these were his orders from the British 'Command', and started delving about for some paper on his desk to prove it. If the *Tenente* did not witness the destruction of the food, he went on, then new supplies would be refused and *il signore* knew only too well that the poor Italian troops in Rome were desperately short of rations and that he, Major Foscarini, was obliged to watch every small item to see that the men got their fair share. The *Tenente* need not be alarmed, he said, the whole business would take up very little time and he would soon be able to return to his office.

By this time it was apparent that the truck had been loaded, as Salvatore was waiting expectantly at the door.

'*Pronto, signori*,' he said, touching his cap.

The atmosphere outside was heavy with the smell of decomposing bully beef. In the middle of the courtyard, drawn up in the shimmering heat, was a lop-sided diesel vehicle, evidently a relic from the earliest days of the mechanisation of the Italian Army. Salvatore swung himself into the seat beside the driver.

The duties of Major Foscarini were at an end. Anyhow, this time he had obviously no intention of accompanying me.

'*Buon viaggio*—pleasant journey—*Signor Tenente*,' he said with an exaggerated bow, as our procession moved off.

Clouds of black smoke billowed out from under Salvatore's truck. It rattled and shuddered so violently along the cobbled streets that often the entire load seemed in danger of slipping off. As usual in the Italian Army, the silencer had been removed from the engine, in an attempt to give it more speed. This, however, had little effect as the truck moved at hardly more than walking pace.

I told my driver to keep at least fifty yards behind. By the time we had reached the Arch of Constantine, the rate of progress had become intolerable, so I decided to wait at the side of the road until the truck was almost out of sight and then to drive on at a reasonable speed until we caught it up. Thus we proceeded in stages past the Pyramid of Cestius and down the Via Ostiense. Often we lost sight of Salvatore altogether amongst the traffic. It was just too bad, I decided, if this meant contravening the regulations—only a maniac would be tempted to climb on to the back of the truck and pilfer some of its stinking cargo.

At S. Paolo Fuori we were almost in the country. The journey up till then had taken forty minutes. Hopes of arriving on time at the Marchesa's were becoming more and more remote, and I had visions of crawling along at this speed all the eight miles to Ostia itself.

At last, opposite the marble honeycombs and half-completed halls of Mussolini's arrogantly conceived exhibition buildings, Salvatore's truck turned off down a lane leading towards the mud banks along the Tiber.

All around was flat marshland. The fields were green and luxuriant, in contrast to the far bank, where some arid hillocks rose, now dried and scorched by the summer sun. Salvatore was making for the only building in sight, the roof of which could just be seen above a clump of stunted umbrella pines and tall bamboo-like grasses. As we jolted behind along the cart ruts, I thought of the back axle of my staff car and prayed that I would be spared from being stranded without hope of transport in the middle of these marshes.

Tall, splintered wooden gates formed the entrance to the yard that surrounded

the building. Salvatore had already dismounted and was gesticulating with a man of about his own height, wearing a wide-brimmed velvet hat and a tattered velvet jacket. As I drove through the gates, Salvatore sprang to attention, whilst his companion bowed and swept off his hat.

'*Ben venuto all' Università*—Welcome to the University,' the man called out to me through the window of my car.

There was now no chance of avoiding the truck, which was drawn up outside the large iron doors which extended along the whole width of the ground floor of the building. What struck me at once, as I got out of my car, was an entirely new smell, far more potent than the cloying persistency of decoyed bully beef. It was sharp and acrid, stinging the nostrils like the first whiff from an ammonia bottle. Everyone else seemed quite unaffected by it—Salvatore, the man in the velvet hat, a swarthy woman singing snatches of opera as she hung out her washing on a balcony above the iron doors. Squealing children scattered a covey of emaciated hens and chased one another about the wheels of Salvatore's truck, some of them attempting to climb on to its mudguards. A dog, brindled like a hyena, slept in the shadow of the staircase leading up to the balcony.

Salvatore came up, holding the arm of the man in the velvet hat. This, he explained with emotion, was his brother Gigi, who looked after the University. I had not yet recovered from this latest onslaught on my senses, and it hardly occurred to me at that stage to wonder why a derelict building—like a barn or abandoned warehouse—in a remote and malarial-looking marsh should be dignified with the title of 'University'. Gigi snatched at my hand and squeezed it sympathetically. His gold teeth out-numbered even Salvatore's.

'*Ben venuto, Signor Tenente*,' he said again, with the air of the proprietor of an expensive night-club.

Salvatore began to talk quickly. I gathered that the truck was going to be unloaded and that meanwhile Gigi would take me on a tour of the University. As soon as the tins were ready, Salvatore would of course let us know, so that I could witness their final destruction.

Once more Salvatore clicked his heels and saluted. Gigi pulled at my sleeve.

'*Venga, venga*,' he said with a flash of gold. 'Come, come,' and waved towards the building.

It was then, as if some hidden Aladdin had given the magic word, that the iron doors rolled suddenly apart. Standing in the entrance was a figure, an animal, a sort of monstrously distorted bull. It was only when the creature came prancing into the sunlight that I saw that beneath it were four naked human feet.

Gigi burst into loud cackles of laughter.

'*Bambini*,' he said, digging me in the ribs with his elbow. '*Scherzano*—Children, playing a game.'

The skin they carried on their heads was all stiff and crinkled and reeked strongly of ammonia. The children, bellowing and making other appropriate bull noises, galloped up to me and capered round in circles. As I stepped backwards to avoid them, they bellowed all the more and came closer.

Gigi, however—although he treated the whole affair as a huge joke—was impatient to take me on his tour of the University. He soon dismissed the children, who screamed excitedly and scampered back into the interior of the building. I then realised that I was expected to follow them.

My first impression, once I had passed the doors, was of a vast, dark room, full of trolleys and incinerators. Then there was the smell. It was something far more vicious than ammonia—indeed so strong that I felt it would rip the skin off the back of my throat. But there was no turning back. Gigi rolled back the doors behind us and dragged me forward.

With grandiose gestures he strutted about the rusted iron incinerators. This one, he said, was not large enough to take a fully grown horse or cow—he used it mainly for smaller animals such as dogs or sheep. Of course during the summer months it was not often that he was able to save the skins, which was a pity as some of them—particularly cats'—fetched good prices in Rome. He showed me a few reeking cat-skins hanging out to dry on the walls of the room.

At that moment the purpose of the

University dawned upon me; it was the place where all the dead animals in Rome were taken to be burnt. Provided that the carcases were not too far decomposed, they must have been a fair source of income to Gigi, as he would sell their skins and hides to furriers and tanners in the city. Most of the skins, I noticed, were suspended by hooks or wooden rails from the ceiling; they looked like an ancient withered colony of gigantic bats.

Gigi insisted on showing me all the smallest details of his domain—every instrument which he used when he stripped the carcases, the trolleys on which they were transported from the dissecting tables to the incinerators. Brown-stained knives, hatchets with two edges, saws, pincers, were all taken out for my edification. It required the utmost tact to dissuade Gigi from presenting me with a special memento of my visit—the front half of the pelt of a large tabby—despite his assurances that it was the very best specimen that had ever come into the University and that it would make an excellent pair of gloves for the winter in England.

At last Salvatore arrived and announced that the tins were ready to be burnt. This operation only lasted a few minutes. A can of petrol was emptied over the tins, which Salvatore had piled up in the centre of the yard, and soon the flames were leaping almost as high as the University itself.

Thirty-five minutes remained before the Marchesa's luncheon, thirty-five minutes which must include rushing back to the mess to spruce myself up before arriving at her palazzo. I was extremely annoyed, therefore, when Gigi again started plucking at my sleeve and saying that he had something else very *interessante* to show to me.

'No, no, I can't wait,' I shouted in English.

'*Si, si,*' insisted Gigi, tightening his grip on my arm.

I looked desperately at my watch.

Both Gigi and Salvatore began jabbering together. Just one more thing, they pleaded. The *Tenente* could not possibly leave the University without seeing it—something very special, something quite unique, the absolute showpiece of the University. I would eternally regret having missed it.

Rather than waste time over argument, I gave way and plunged again into the putrescent gloom of the University. I was conducted to a table on which lay a large object draped in rags and sacking. Gigi at once drew them back and then stood reverently to one side so that I could admire his 'showpiece'.

It was an enormous skull—so huge that

I had no idea what animal it could have belonged to. Every particle of flesh had been scraped away; it was shining and glistening white as though meticulously polished.

Gigi came forward, fondled its smooth shape and ran a finger round the eye-sockets. He explained that it was the skull of an elephant, which had died from starvation during the war at the Zoo. Unfortunately it had been so long before the keepers had been able to shift the carcase, that by the time it had reached him, the hide had decomposed and there was nothing worth saving—except the skull. What was more, those wretches at the Zoo had gone and removed the tusks, which would have fetched a formidable price in such difficult days.

When I had expressed suitable appreciation and had finally said good-bye, there was only enough time to drive straight to the Marchesa's palazzo without calling at the mess on the way. As I drove furiously along the Via Ostiense, I cursed that smug old Foscarini who by now was probably settling down to his plate of spaghetti and Parmesan cheese. I tried hard to switch my mind to the bright company ahead. But it was no use —the memory of the University clung obstinately and maliciously, even to my clothes.

The palazzo stood in one of those cramped noisy streets between the Pantheon and the Piazza Navona. I followed a doddering porter up the marble staircase, so cool, so refreshing after the glare and hurly-burly outside. I admired the Pinturini frescoes commissioned by the 'Yellow' Cardinal and Gorga's busts of the Bandaccio ancestors. Once the Young Pretender had climbed these steps; so had Paulina Borghese, Wagner, and in more recent years General Mark Clark and the Supreme Allied Commander.

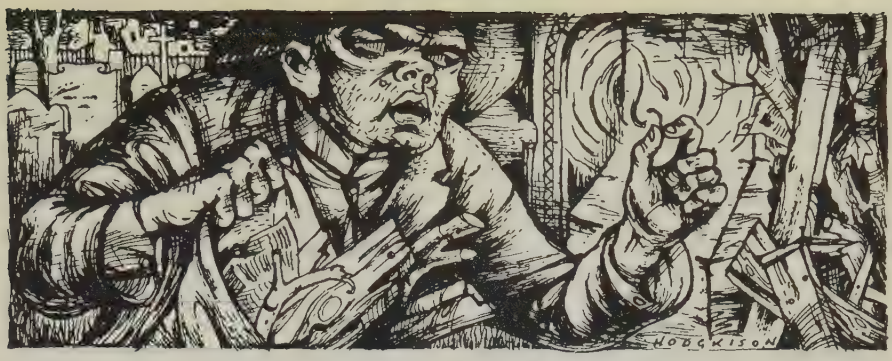
At last we reached a kind of entrance-hall, shuttered and deliciously cool. The porter, in an attitude that struck a familiar chord, stood proudly to one side, as if to allow me to savour the full magnificence of the room. It took some time for my eyes to become accustomed to the subdued light. I had the impression of a large number of white masks hung in rows along the walls, one above the other. When I looked more closely, I saw that they were the skulls of animals, bristling with horns and antlers, all neatly mounted and inscribed. Only occasionally had the heads been preserved complete; I noticed particularly a rhinoceros and an animal that was probably a moose.

'Verry preettee, yes?' wheezed the old porter, nudging me with his elbow.

As I walked slowly across the room, across the lion skin stretched on the polished parquet floor, I recalled the deeds of the Marchesa's explorer-husband, so graphically described in her last book of memoirs. Then something else caught my attention—over the portico of the door in front of me; it was the head of an elephant, beady eyed, tusks gleaming, trunk arrogantly raised.

'Ah,' sighed the porter triumphantly, as he saw me looking up at it, 'that—that—' he seemed to be searching for the right word in his halting English, 'that ees our showpiece.'

And through the open door came the smell of a delicious luncheon, exquisitely prepared.



The Incendiary

DIANA GARDNER

For some time Diplock had heard the planes coming to Canterbury through a half-sleep. It was only when the H.E. bombs were dropped that he wakened fully—but slowly, for he was dull-witted—in his bare-raftered room above the wagon-shed. He wore a grimed, buttonless night-shirt. As he sat upon his iron bedstead, the glare from the fire-bombs, seven miles away, on the old city, revealed the black hair on his chest—as if he had a hole there. His eyes, too, could be seen plainly: white-looking, wild.

He got out and went, bent—he was very tall—to the low-set window. Bright flashes lit up the countryside. So someone's trying to bring down the cathedral! he thought, his head unusually clear. Four flares were now dropped—three pink and one green—which sank slowly to earth. In their light he saw the night sky, static, vast, indifferent, and across the sleeping meadows the cathedral's three towers as if built up of coral, against the inky blue.

His mouth dropped open. Was one of the towers about to fall? Surely it was brittle and would crack and topple! He gripped the worm-rotted window-sill eagerly. Perhaps, quite soon, the whole cathedral would totter and die—in that weird, pink light.

But finally, the clangour died away, leaving broad fires in different parts of the city. By their light—thick smoke had begun to make it difficult for him to see—he nevertheless realised that the three towers were still standing intact, unharmed. The cathedral had not died.

For the remainder of the night he slept badly, as if in a fever. The next day he was quieter than ever—he rarely spoke—although everyone else was talking about the raid. At tea in the farmhouse kitchen with the two landgirls and the undercowman, Diplock was shut away, dark.

On the face of it, he had ignored the raid—but this was not so: in his own painful way he thought about it unceasingly. At times, too, the cathedral became, in his mind, a person. At night he shouted in his sleep.

But the wagon-shed was far from the farmhouse, and he was not heard.

II

It was not, however, until early spring, two years later, when, hoeing young barley, his gaze was drawn by the straight, narrow lines of green to where the cathedral rode, serene, complacent, amid the slowly travelling clouds, that his mind gave a great heave and seemed to burst open. He must bring those spires and towers—this morning, the colour of light sand—to the ground!

But how would he do it? He leaned on his hoe.

He finished working in the green, misty field at six o'clock, and returned to the farmhouse for tea. This evening he was surprisingly talkative—the words, in his high voice, cracking out like pistol shots. His white-banded grey eyes—they were like a sheepdog's—were pink and feverish-looking. Afterwards, he went to his loft and sat for a long time on the untidy bed, staring at the floor.

No one, not even Diplock himself, knew how he had come to the farm, nor from where. The present farmer had, as it were, taken him over with the stock and implements in 1929. Probably he had arrived there when a boy, as a 'crow-starver', from some remote village or wood. He did not know who had been his father or mother.

There was much that was pitiable about the dirty head—its thick hair flattened by perspiration—as it leaned forward, working out its vision of destruction. He was like an old animal—awkward, ferocious, witless. He had never been able to share his thoughts with anyone.

The under-cowman and one of the land-girls now came to get out their bicycles from the shed below. He heard them laughing. They were off to the 'flicks' in Canterbury. They meant nothing to him: he could not even remember what they looked like.

Twenty minutes later he climbed down the ladder and followed the farm track, through two gates, into the lane: he was going to the inn. On the wide evening landscape he was the only moving object just then, except for a herd of brown cows. The sky was cloudless, and everywhere was the sense of spring. Every now and then he stopped to look at the cathedral in the distance.

At the inn he went to his usual place—a bench in a corner. No one took any notice of him; he thought of no one. Only once had the beer and the company affected him: he had grown excited, shouting in his high voice, and the landlord had not known what to do. He now drank his beer slowly—his mouth open, showing his bad teeth. With his large, earth-coarsened hands, he made patterns with old matches, tremblingly. The matches could be made to represent the cathedral. With one movement he could then sweep them all away.

Tonight, he bought a second pint and drank it slowly. He would be slow, too, about the cathedral. It had been there a long while—it could wait a little longer. In the meantime, he could watch it—knowing what was later going to happen. Yes, no doubt it was quite old—had been there in the time of the black bearded giant who rose sometimes into his mind from its shadows; whose feet stood wide apart on the mud floor of the crumbling keeper's cottage in the depths of the wood, and whose arm seemed always raised to strike. That had been his father.

He was aware also, in his confusion, that the cathedral was extraordinarily beautiful. He knew this. Years before, when he was a boy, he had stood at the end of Butchery Row staring, amazed, at the stone vision towering against the sky. When he was thirty, he had once gone inside. It had been after a royal visit, and the atmosphere had been tense and exultant, with flushed-looking crowds. The organ had suddenly pealed out—perhaps it was a fanfare. At first he had been uplifted by its beauty, but as the great sounds rolled in the high vaulting, he had been hit by fear: they were like some kind of anger. Despite his great height and limbs, he had felt puny, defenceless, and the faces of the people who passed him seemed to be made out of indiarubber. He had rushed back into the town.

Leaving the inn, and as he lay down awkwardly on his creaking bed, his head was clearer than it had been for years. He would destroy the cathedral, but he would wait for the right moment to do it.

For some time yet, he would allow it to stand above the corn.

III

Often that summer he would pull up his horses in the fields, and look at the cathedral. Sometimes, against the pale sky, it seemed as if built up out of sand.

In the autumn, however, when the mist collected at tea-time, he had the impression that the building stood on top of it, that it was without weight. And as the mists thickened and the cathedral was blotted out, Diplock's heart would turn over: Had it really gone? Was it going to escape him?

This used to worry him, making him feel he ought to hurry.

He had begun to make a hoard of paper and bits of wood in one corner of the wagon-shed.

IV

But it was not until the spring of the following year—when one morning he stood in the glittering corn-field—that the moment came. The cathedral, like some giant jewel in the haze, seemed suddenly to move—almost to dance—before him: to come nearer, then to recede, across the fields.

He brought out his red handkerchief and wiped his neck. He had better hurry —if he meant to get her—or she'd be gone.

That night he lived through the shriek and rumble of the cathedral's dying. The flames were over a hundred feet high. Now and then, through the rolling smoke, he saw the towers, black and gutted, and the empty windows, like sightless, red eyes. It was like a great Day, long foretold—as a child he had been to Sunday school—with a great movement on the earth. The whole flat countryside seemed filled with all the people who had ever lived there, and who were now hurrying, expectant, exultant, to see this great spectacle: their cathedral go down in the flames. He joined the throng along nonexistent roads over the sleeping fields. The moon and the stars had gone from the sky.

He groaned. When the first tower fell, he shouted out, and a dog barked over at the farm. The farmer got up to see who was about, but all he saw was the moonlit meadows and, in the far distance, the white shape of the cathedral—very small. He went back to bed.

After Diplock had finished work the following day and had taken tea in the farm kitchen, he washed carefully at the pump, and afterwards climbed to his loft to put on his best clothes: a black suit, and an old-fashioned stiff hat. He looked like something from the past: some preacher.

He then stuffed his collection of wood and paper into a large sack, and slung it across his shoulder. Into his pocket he put a box of matches.

One of the landgirls, from an attic window in the farmhouse, saw him go. She was writing to her mother, and now described how she had never before seen this queer labourer look so powerful, so purposeful. Oddly, too, something disturbed her sleep that night, and looking from her window, she thought she saw flames at Canterbury.

As he struck the footpath across the fields, Diplock felt that he walked again in the throng of the night before—that he was one of thousands on some old pilgrimage. But later, when the daylight faded into the spring moonlight—without darkness ever really coming—he was struck suddenly by a great and terrible loneliness. He seemed to carry on his back the strain of the whole earth.

Towards the end of that long trek, however, this, in turn, gave way to the single purpose of destroying the cathedral.

At ten o'clock he was in the city. But it was too early as yet: there were too many people still about. He must wait. He wandered impatiently about in the narrow, dark streets on the edge.

The place had changed since last he had seen it. In the moonlight he could make out where, here and there, whole buildings had disappeared. Why was that? he wondered. He had forgotten the air-raid.

At eleven, the streets had emptied, but he waited another half-hour—to make certain. Mist was now collecting. Unobserved (a policeman was flashing his torch into the ruins of Woolworth's and did not see him), Diplock slipped down Butchery Row.

The Close was still warm from the heat of the day. In the silver light the cathedral rose like a great hill against him. He felt that in some way it was alive—but, because of being built in stone, was fixed and could not, therefore, harm him. He crossed the great paving stones by the entrance and crept carefully across the gravel to the farther side. Here were deep shadows, and beyond, bombed buildings. He felt less likely to be seen here.

For the next two hours he built his fire. He had never felt so sure of himself, nor had his awkward limbs moved with such ease. First, he heaped his paper and sticks —in the corner of a buttress, and against the solid stone. He believed that his fire would be strong enough even to ignite that.

Afterwards he went backwards and forwards into the ruined buildings, collecting anything that would burn. Once he crossed the High Street to search a bombed-out shop. It was strange that no one, not even the fire-watchers, heard or saw him.

When he had finished, the cathedral clock struck two—high-up, loud, impersonal: how unaware it seemed of what he was doing! His heart tightened. His eyes followed the line of the buttress into the roof—there it was white in the moonlight. The timbers of that would go first: the great cross-beams crashing into the pit of flame. Afterwards the towers would tilt and fall.

But by that time he would not be there. He would be watching from a distant field. After he had gone, his fire would go on with his work, like a good labourer.

He brought out his matches. The dark shape of the heaped timber in the shadow by the buttress was like some waiting, obedient animal. He lit a match. In the windless air the flame burrowed gaily into the paper, then spread out among the smaller sticks. The flames took hold quickly. A single match had done it! Diplock could smell the burning wood: he was very excited. The fire then creaked and sank a little, like someone getting comfortable in bed. It would burn for hours.

Diplock now looked about him—the mist was thinning out. For the first time since entering the Close, he was afraid of being seen. He went quickly to a bombed building on the edge, and hid deep within the rubble. From there he could watch the fire.

He waited some time. The fire rose like a human being, spreading its arms upwards at the dark, silent windows. That side of the great building was now a vivid yellow and black. Diplock clenched his teeth. This was what he had been waiting for—although it was as yet only the prelude of the grandeur and triumph to come.

Finally, he left his hiding place, and ran through the town. He went none too soon. The constable at the top of the High Street had seen the flames; the fire-guards smelt the smoke and came out of their post (they had been playing cards); a householder in the Close opened a window, and afterwards came out, wearing a white mackintosh over his night clothes.

It was not, however, necessary to call in the fire brigade: the bonfire was already going down. Some dismantling finished it, and the policeman's boot put out the last flames. By three-thirty all was over. The only damage had been a discolouration of the cathedral wall.

Diplock, however, on his way to the wagon-shed seven miles away, saw a different end. He kept stopping to watch the vivid colours of the flames against the dark sky—the moon had gone down. The cathedral took a long time to burn. Around the gutted towers rolled bolsters of violet smoke. As he had foreseen, the nave roof went first—the roar of its going reaching him out there in the fields. Afterwards, the fire in the old building had shone for a long time through the stained glass windows—before they too had gone, splintering like stars.

He sweated and smiled. Every now and then, he waved his arms.

V

The next morning Diplock worked in the barley-field. The weather was filled with the serene light of early spring, and some dark crows kept swooping on the pale edge of the field. Above the faint mist in the meadows could be seen the cathedral. In this morning's light it appeared larger, brighter. The three towers could be clearly seen.

Diplock did not appear to notice it. He did not once look up from his work—except now and then to clap his hands and scare away the crows.

Christopher Fry

A REJOINDER TO THE EDITOR BY ROBERT GITTINGS

Mr. Gittings, who is himself a dramatic poet, produced The Boy with a Cart *and* The Firstborn *on the Third Programme of the B.B.C.*

NOTHING can harm a poet so much as the good intentions of his friends; when a poet is also a popular success, the chances of harm are greater, for his friends—or friendly critics—then seem to adopt an exclusive or possessive tone, which not only does less than justice to the poet, but results in bad and uninformed judgments about his work. Keats, who suffered more than most in this way, has left a very frank picture of this situation:

> 'Think of my Pleasure in Solitude, in comparison of my commerce with the world—there I am a child—there they do not know me, not even my most intimate acquaintance—I give into their feelings as though I were refraining from irritating a little child—Some think me middling, others silly, others foolish—every one thinks he sees my weak side against my will, when in truth it is with my will—I am content to be thought all this because I have in my own breast so great a resource. This is one great reason why they like me so; because they can all show to advantage in a room, and eclipse from a certain tact one who is reckoned to be a good Poet.'

Every word of this might stand as a description of one aspect of the remarkable success of Christopher Fry, who is in many other ways more like Keats than any other poet of our time, except that some of Fry's friendly admirers have lacked that 'certain tact' which Keats was at least lucky enough to find. The possessive tone, a proprietary air about the poet, has crept into nearly all public discussion of his work, and if Fry had not had 'so great a resource' of good sense in himself, it might have been very harmful for his work. As it is, practically everything that has been written on him and his plays has, in its friendly zeal to give some exclusive impression, just plainly and simply got the facts wrong. Even his publishers, who have a world-wide reputation for never deviating one comma from strict accuracy, are not altogether blameless. Less conscientious publications have not scrupled to invent.

It is therefore valuable and interesting that D. and P. M. Fitzgerald in *World Review* have tried to give an objective criticism of Fry's work. Their tone is refreshing; they do not claim, on the strength of a few friendly drinks or a day in the Cotswolds, to look into the poet's mystery as if they were God's spies. They quote; they compare, they analyse; they draw conclusions from the work itself, and not from some personal foible. It is a type of criticism which is at least healthy for a poet. On the other hand, it is a type of criticism which by its very method runs into its own dangers, which are those of all objective writing. It is cool and antiseptic; but you cannot quite treat poetry or plays as surgical cases. It isolates: but it is dangerous to isolate speeches from their context in a play. It is precise; but precision often limits the view. There can be a larger aspect.

To make this clear, here is a brief summary of their article:

(1) Fry's plays, with one exception, are said to be not new, but the tail-end of something so called 'for want of a better word' Georgian.

(2) This is demonstrated by a remarkable series of parallel quotations from Fry's plays and the works of Gordon

Bottomley, Lascelles Abercrombie, Alfred Noyes and Robert Bridges.

(3) The principle of this verse is said to be 'diffusion', and its drama is said to have four characteristics: (a) a semi-mythical subject, (b) an absence of any real dramatic interaction between the characters, (c) the appearance of a mother as a chief character, (d) a note of whimsical self-deprecation.

(4) This is said to have resulted in 1900–25, and in most of Fry's plays now, in what Arnold Bennett described as 'a cocoon of hexameters' which are easier to write than prose.

(5) Fry is, however, given full credit for 'maintaining interest in the poetic drama' and his latest play, *A Sleep of Prisoners*, is appreciated as a new development on his part, with strong action and a real tension in the language.

(6) The article ends by deploring that the Arts Theatre should have revived Fry's earliest full-length play *The Firstborn*, instead of waiting for a new play in which he might have developed further the great improvement he had shown in *A Sleep of Prisoners*.

Now all this seems to be fair comment, and so it deserves to be answered fairly and squarely. To criticise the critics, it seems as if the observations are accurate and clear-headed, but that the conclusions drawn from them have not been clearly thought out. To take the half-dozen points in order:

(1) The word 'Georgian' is used, not for the first time, as a vaguely prejudicial term, so as to lead to the syllogism that if Fry's plays can be shown to resemble 'Georgian' plays, they are therefore bad. Now this use of the term 'Georgian' is itself as false as the former use of the word 'Victorian', which is rapidly being discredited now that we find the Victorians were really roaring fellows, full of exciting complexes, just like ourselves, etc. What, in any case, was the influence of the Georgians on the language of verse-drama? Robert Graves, certainly no friend to the Georgian movement, gives it its due:

'The Georgians' general recommendations were the discarding of archaistic diction such as "Thee" and "thou" and "floweret" and "whene'er" and of poetical constructions such as "winter drear" and "host on armed host" and of pomposities generally.'[1]

One has only to look back at the plays of, say, Alfred Austin, to see how healthy this was for verse-drama. It was not enough for major poetry, and Graves goes on to criticise the movement for producing in the main only a weak 'nature' poetry 'that could be praised rather for what it was not than for what it was.' This same criticism of the Georgians was made by Christopher Fry himself. Writing in an early letter, he said: 'The Georgian "blackbird-for-the sake-of-blackbirds" is a pretty moulted fowl.' Even as a schoolboy, he was writing 'Georgian' verse, but with a different, a major note:

Oh, if for me the mighty avenue
Of such immortal young is barred, and earth
Is mine for years, and I must grow into
A man whom God will weep at in his mirth,
Then I shall take my boyish life and hide it
And write upon the hidden grave: 'In truth
Here lies a part of life within whose breast
Sparkled the first fresh politics of youth'—
And keep it quite secure from all the rest.

(2) The parallel quotations between Fry's work and these earlier verse-dramatists are very striking, but surely they are not surprising. It shows a strange lack of historical sense to think it odd that a drama of the second quarter of a century should grow naturally out of what was written in the first quarter. Fry has simply developed, in his own highly individual way, this type of drama; and why not? His only alternative would have been to follow the Imagists of 1913, who, with all their virtues, have been singularly sterile in drama. The critics' quarrel is not with Fry but with history, and history will not stop its development for them or for anyone else. That Fry has developed this writing, out of all recognition, can be

[1] Robert Graves: *The Common Asphodel:* Essays on Poets and Poetry

shown by random quotations out of his seven plays, taken not from major moments but from what Keats (once more) would have called the 'bye-writing'.

The circle is broken and the sheep wander.
They pull the branches of the myrtle under:
Nibble the shadow of the cypress, trample
The yew, and break the willow of its tears.
This is no grief of theirs.

The Boy With a Cart (1937)

The golden bear Success
Hugs a man close to its heart; and breaks his bones.

The Firstborn (1938–45)

What appears
Is so unlike what is. And what is madness
To those who only observe, is often wisdom
To those to whom it happens.

A Phoenix Too Frequent (1946)

I can pass to you
Generations of roses in this wrinkled berry.
There: now you hold in your hand a race
Of summer gardens, it lies under centuries
Of petals. What is not, you have in your palm.[1]

The Lady's Not For Burning (1947)

Lambs in a skittle prance, the hobbling rook
Like a witch picking sticks,
And pinnacle-ears the hare
Ladling himself along in the emerald wheat.

Thor, With Angels (1948)

The leaves transfigured by the thought of death,
The wind south-west, a blue sky buffaloed
By cloud, the sun approaching its eclipse.

Venus Observed (1949)

There's no loosening, since men with men
Are like the knotted sea. Lift him down
From the stone to the grass again, and, even so free,
Yet he will find the angry cities hold him.

A Sleep of Prisoners (1951)

Everywhere here Fry has developed through Georgian verse-writing and beyond it. An original major poetic talent can always be tested by this 'bye-writing'; these quotations leave little doubt that Fry has this talent.

(3) More weighty are the criticisms of dramatic tone and construction—except for the first of them, which surely cannot have been seriously meant.

(a) The plays deal with semi-mythical subjects—what in heaven's name can be wrong with that? Rule out that, and you throw away every scrap of Greek drama, and, in fact, the major drama of most nations. As Plato said, each generation relies on its poets to make new myths for it; Fry has found at least two myths appropriate to our singular times, the myth of the Soldier Who Wanted to Die, and the myth of the other soldiers who didn't. That the myths are grim is again a commentary on our times.

(b) The absence of any real dramatic interaction between the characters is a real criticism of Fry's work, and it has often been made. The plays have curious lapses in construction; there is the young girl in *The Lady's Not For Burning* who, for no reason at all, disappears for an act and a half. The truth is that Fry seems happiest not with a conventional dramatic interaction, but with a kind of dramatic counterpoint; the parallel themes of the two middle-aged women, Anath and Miriam, in *The Firstborn* make a striking example. It is one of his contributions to our theatre, just as it was one of Tchekov's to the Russian, but one could sometimes wish him more like another imported influence, Ibsen, with that old master's talent for what T. C. Worsley has called 'increasing the pressure in the barometer'.

(c) The Mother as chief character *may* be a main theme in Georgian verse-drama,

[1] In thought and words this *is* almost exactly like an obscure Georgian lyric; but is it any less beautiful and true, or, in the theatre, dramatically moving?

though the example that jumps to mind is not there but in W. H. Auden's *The Ascent of F.6*; even if it is, there is no reason to think that Fry copied it. Every dramatist has a favourite type of character, about whom he writes most easily; it is not always the character he eventually draws best, since those which cost more labour are often more fully conceived, but it is one of the things that helps him to write the play at all. Fry has a natural gift for depicting middle-aged women, spinsters as often as mothers, a gift he shares with one of our best prose playwrights, Wynyard Browne. Anath and Miriam, mentioned above, are among his best creations.

(d) The note of whimsical self-deprecation is again a real criticism, though again it is a criticism not of Fry but of English drama over the last six hundred years, as the article itself admits. The examples are well-chosen; they are lines which—to be personal for the first and last time—have often left me unamused while the rest of an audience yelled to recognise what I can only presume they had been led to think were typical 'Fry-lines'. They are not, fortunately; Fry's real humour is the humour of wry and well-observed humanity, of the Chaplain in *The Lady's Not For Burning*, of the puzzled prig, Dominic, in *Venus Observed*.

(4) There is a short answer to this. If anyone thinks that any dramatic verse of any sort is easier to write than prose—let him try!

(5) The critics are entirely right. *A Sleep of Prisoners*, for just the reasons they give, its firm action and the tension of its verse, is a tremendous advance.

(6) We should all like a new play from Mr. Fry; but this feeling has led the critics to do very much less than justice to *The Firstborn*. Even after revision, it is not by any means a perfect play, but it is perhaps something a good deal more important than that. It is a play of experiment, not of mere technical invention, but of real probing in thought and in poetry. It is the play of what is known in religious terms as a Seeker, and it is a kind of primal evidence that Fry is a thinker of serious importance. Many people vaguely mention the famous Quaker name which Fry bears as if that were some sort of religious trademark, and then go on to discuss his work from a purely theatrical angle. The Fitzgeralds themselves have partly followed this personal-column West-End view of Fry, which glibly chats about him as an actor, a producer, a theatrical director, a man of the theatre (whatever that means), and neglects the one obvious fact that he is a poet and a thinker. *The Firstborn* is a huge quarry of Fry's best thought and poetry, the rock out of which he has hewn the massive support of his work; poetically, it is full of precious stones. Like all stones they need cutting, as he himself in his last revision has recognised, but the great core of his philosophy is intact. It deals with something more than conventional dramatic conflict—the dilemma of man and of God; the eternal question, of which he takes an eternal view.

MOSES

Clear?
Evidence of that! Where in this drouthy
Overwatered world can you find me clarity?
What spirit made the hawk? a bird obedient
To grace, a bright lash on the cheek of the wind
And drawn and ringed with feathered earth and sun,
An achievement of eternity's birdsmith. But did he
Also bleak the glittering charcoal of the eyes
And sharpen beak and claws on his hone of lust?
What language is life? Not one I know.
A quarrel in God's nature.

The 'quarrel in God's nature', which Fry has generally thought best to illustrate by the paradoxes and verbal contrasts of comedy, is at the back of all his thought, and is essential to our understanding of his plays. It explains why—like Donagh McDonagh in *Happy as Larry*—he can write roaring comedies all on the subject of death. Where he goes far beyond McDonagh, or any other verse-dramatist, is where the major poet outstrips the clever and pleasing verse-maker. The

speech of Moses, like many others in this play, is not only great thought but great poetry. That it is poetry and thought quite original to Fry can be seen by glancing back for a moment to his juvenilia:

> 'A man whom God will weep at in his mirth'

and

> 'Sparkled the first fresh politics of youth.'

Both the idea and the expression are there in embryo. The critics, as I suggested, might have taken a larger view; seen development and not pastiche; seen thought and not caprice; really studied Fry for what he is and always has been—a poet in the line of great English poetry.

Early Summer

BY HENRY RAYNOR

What did They talk of, those Two, as They walked
Between the lawns, past tennis-courts, amidst
The noisy games of children, paused
By the busy lake, or stood
Inside the cool museum?

Was the Old Woman tired? On afternoons
Of easy sunshine through long holidays from school,
After the morning housework, packing sandwiches
And bringing tea, She would go with Him
Across the town, carried by jangling trams
To this or other park.
All the attractions of the open—the smoke-stained grass
Worn thin by children's never-ending games,
Gardens where neat and managed flowers conveyed
A dignified, precisely-ordered charm,
The lake, where for a penny He would sit
One hand suspended from the motor-launch—
All these would be
Sooner or later finished: there remained
Only the salvage of the older days
Stored in long galleries, where He
Would stand and peer, half-understanding, interested in all.
But did She say,
After the housework and the jolting tram,
'Sit here with me, and watch the children play,'
Or by the tennis-court, 'Look at this game
While I sit here and rest'? I do not know.
Did She explain, beside the showcase pause,
Make clear to catch His childish intellect
The function of the foil or of épée, or annotate
The age and origin of scimitars,
Distinguish chain-mail from the later forms
Of jointed, plated armour? Did She ever speak?
Was it Her own quiet hope of Quietness
That led Him to those long still galleries?

It is too long ago: all these estranging years
Of alteration have flowed round, and in the Park
The scimitars lie rusted in closed rooms
And spiders' webs have trellised the glass case
With flimsy patterns, yet the games
Continue on the smoky grass, and rowing boats
Are undisturbed by clumsy motor-launch:
The years have worn their track between the trees
And other winds have blown away the words
They used on their long afternoons of ease.
Whatever talk there was, the sounds have gone;
Only the fact of their companionship,
The strange intimacy of age and childhood, stays
With those two figures clear within the mind.

She walked along, a slow and heavy tread,
In heavy and quaint clothing, and Her face
Heavy and lined, firm lips and eyebrows stretched
Strict over stern, calm eyes:
And He, the Child, thin, with a childish stoop,
Dressed girlishly by women, His long hair
Fine, falling on His forehead, and His face
Childishly serious. Were they hand in hand?
Was there some token of companionship? For there was love
Calm and assured, between Them, an intensity
Of confident devotion undisturbed
By any but His fears of what would be.
Night after night, after the day with Her,
After the housework, He would add to prayers
Approved by Her and others, for a secret hope,
That She might live to see a hundred years,
That He would be a man to face Her death,
As though He knew how easier for man
It is to know the loss of friends, and face
Time's robbery. Where had He seen,
Surrounded by that certainty of love
This that He knew by heart
If human coldness, and where did She find
Her heavenly patience with His childishness
When She had grown so old?

Yet, as They walked together, not a word
Was said to mark intimacy, to stand
Clear in His boyish mind and wait
For manhood's clear translation:
They walked along their path, and nothing shows—
Only her calm surrender to His wish—
The early love, the Child's sure confidence
Of understanding, and the certainty
In which They passed together through a world
Where they could face all time's long loneliness
In the becalmed contentment of their love.

The World of Books

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN FRANCE 1815–1871

By John Plamenatz. *Longmans.* 16s.

Reviewed by Max Beloff

In the period since the war, no less than before it, the internal politics of France have been a key to the international situation. To talk of European unity while there is no unity in France and while millions of Frenchmen give their political support to a party which is no more than the agent of a foreign power is wishful thinking of the most foolish and dangerous variety. Yet French politics to the outsider appear as mysterious as they are important. Everyone knows that they are directly related to the great experience of the original French Revolution in the eighteenth century and to its nineteenth-century successors. Few can explain the channels through which these historical events have exerted their continuing influence, or the extent to which the interpretations current of one event have influenced the activities of Frenchmen in the subsequent crisis. Where explanations are offered, they are mostly false.

As Mr. Plamenatz points out, the Marxists are largely to blame for this, because their great error is 'to search hard for the causes of things before they have looked carefully at the things themselves. They know, so they think, what revolutions are, and they also know what kind of events their causes must be. This knowledge they acquire not from history but from philosophy; and their task as historians is to discover not what happened but what must have happened. Their whole conception of history is false; it assumes that the activities recorded by the historian can be divided into so many categories, of which one is "fundamental" in relation to the others. It is a gratuitous assumption because there is no evidence of its truth; and it is also dangerous, because those who make it look only for the evidence they want to find.' And so Mr. Plamenatz, rather than produce a formal interpretation of the French revolutionary movement in the nineteenth century and its ideas, has for the most part limited himself to a straightforward narrative of the events themselves, written in an easy and almost colloquial style, with none of the portentous pretentiousness of many other professional historians.

The story is itself so absorbing a one—French nineteenth-century history is the most interesting history there is—and Mr. Plamenatz's skill and scholarship is so lightly borne, that one may fail to appreciate at first the novelty of his approach and conclusions.

Yet in a brief concluding chapter, Mr. Plamenatz reveals himself as a philosopher as well as an historian and effectively demolishes on the basis of his study of the facts not merely the Marxist myth of France's nineteenth-century development with its effort to reduce everything to the single denominator of class, but also another almost as prevalent one, based on an overestimate of Thiers's much quoted remark that 'the republic is what divides us the least.' The republican idea did not triumph by default at a moment of defeat, but because by then the political and social ideals which it had so long pursued were those held in varying degrees by the great majority of Frenchmen. Mr. Plamenatz would do a great service if, in another volume, he would pursue his theme from 1871 to the present day.

THE WISDOM OF THE SANDS

By Antoine de St. Exupery, translated by Stuart Gilbert. *Hollis & Carter.* 21s.

Reviewed by Wrey Gardiner

This book is the English translation of *Citadelle*, the last work of a great Frenchman who is in process of becoming one of the mythical figures of our time. It is a summing-up of his philosophy of life. Into it he put twenty-five years of experience. The form of *The Wisdom of the Sands* is one which does not make for facile reading

and, though of easy indigenous growth in France, is not popular in this country. It is written as the occasional thoughts of a prince of a desert empire. St. Exupery knew well the vast territory of the Sahara that had been created in his time by such men as Charles de Foucauld, Lyautey and Laperrine, who met his death in a way that the author of *Night Flight* must have deeply felt.

At the age of forty-three, St. Exupery got himself to North Africa and into service as a fighter pilot. His last flight was a reconnaissance from Sardinia over France. His plane was reported brought down in flames by a young German lieutenant at Avignon, who was a constant reader of St. Exupery's books. In this, his last one, occur the words 'blinded as you are by your base arithmetic you no longer understand that one crowded moment may be worth a lifetime.'

It is claimed by the publishers of this English translation that it is the most remarkable book to come out of France since 1940; most remarkable perhaps not, but the greatest, in spite of its English dress which lies like a squab of Turkish delight on it. The style is not Biblical, which is just good English Jacobean, but what one might call the 'phoney archaic' or the 'lo and behold' school of writing. It is a pity, because embedded in this rebarbative honeycomb of translator's pinchbeck is a great deal of real poetry.

'The death of the gardener does not harm the tree, but if you threaten the tree the gardener dies twice.

'If you would understand men begin by never listening to them. For the nailsmith talks to you of his nails, and the astronomer of stars. And both forget utterly the sea.'

It would be a mistake to swallow St. Exupery whole, however. There are many signs in his book that he did not understand poets or poetry, women or prostitutes, and indeed empire itself.

But for all that, he was a very great man, one of those Frenchmen who were pioneers in the 'twenties and early 'thirties when to fly to Buenos Aires, to be familiar with the country of the Toureg, were not the near heroic feats of modern pilots and lorry drivers but the true clothing of the Homeric hero himself.

COMMUNISM, DEMOCRACY AND CATHOLIC POWER

By Paul Blanshard. *Cape.* 18s.

Reviewed by B. C. L. Keelan

There is always a market for the anti-popery tract. Everyone likes to be confirmed in his prejudices, particularly when the tract is given a scholarly and respectable air by documentation and an elaborate *apparatus criticus.* Catholicism, like Communism, says Mr. Blanshard, is undemocratic and therefore a menace. Absolute power, according to his thesis, is the aim of the Vatican and the Kremlin, but the 'imperialism' of the former is a danger insufficiently appreciated. Both organisations employ similar methods of thought-control and discipline and similar strategies to achieve their ends. The fact that the Catholic Church happens to be on the side of the democratic angels at present should not blind the 'free' peoples of the world to the fact that the Vatican is working to enslave them. Catholics, Mr. Blanshard believes, are already enslaved, intellectually, morally and socially, and the Vatican, served by bishops and priests all over the world, is designed to keep them in subjection. It never seems to occur to him that there is a simple way for these millions of serfs to throw off their chains—by leaving the Church.

Despite his familiarity with the documents and externals of Catholicism, Mr. Blanshard has a very limp grasp of the Catholic faith. His hundred per cent Americanism seems to have prevented him from learning that to Christians the end of man is not temporal but eternal and that the Church exists to help him achieve it. To regard the practice of religion as a permissive social activity only so long as it remains subordinate to the requirements of the State is a view that has more in common with the Kremlin than with the Capitol. The assumption, which the author appears to make, that opposition to Leviathan on moral grounds is always wrong cannot be accepted by those for whom Leviathan is not supreme. The question begged by Mr. Blanshard is: What is the nature and end of man? Until he has asked and answered it, he should not assume perversity in those who have.

His more than pontifical judgments about the deviation of modern Catholicism from primitive Christianity might have greater validity if he had examined the attitude of the early Christians to the Roman Empire. Did they accept blindly the rule of the civil authority? Must there not always be tension between the world and the spirit?

Mr. Blanshard is on safer ground with his selective reading of history and his illustrations of abuses by ecclesiastics—though these have been attacked with greater force and knowledge by a Bloy or a Bernanos. 'Present Vatican policy,' says Mr. Blanshard in his final chapter, 'is fundamentally un-American' and that, of course, is the really unforgivable thing.

THE CHANGING CULTURE OF A FACTORY

By Elliott Jaques, M.D., Ph.D. *Tavistock Publications.* 28s.

Reviewed by C. A. Rowland

This is an account of an investigation undertaken by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations into the workings of a light engineering factory, employing some 1,500 people. Anyone concerned with industrial relations, which should mean all of us, will find it of absorbing interest, although some of its truths may be obscurely expressed.

Wastage through friction in the transmission of mechanical energy has been the subject of continuous study. Here, for the first time, is an objective study of wastage through friction in the transmission of human energy. Every employee in industry, either consciously or unconsciously, knows how much this is; management knows it less frequently, for various reasons. In this particular case, it was only because the firm had a remarkable history of labour relations that their employees felt free to ventilate their grievances without undue fear of victimisation. That there was still a considerable residue of such fear, only to be dispelled by the tact and integrity of the consultants, is itself a social comment.

It is fortunately nowhere implied that an immediate increase in morale could be assured by full and frank discussions within the factory, carried on by all and sundry. There is a psychic marriage between works and management, in which it may be as ill-advised to intervene too hopefully as in any unhappy human marriage. But even if these tensions cannot be released at random without disaster, it would considerably aid our thinking on industrial problems if we realised how real this marriage is, a marriage that is, incidentally, often expected to work under conditions which in personal life would be considered obsolete. The book sheds an interesting sidelight on what might be considered the 'harem' system in industry, that is, one in which welfare is showered on the workers from above, without any real participation of the workers even in the choice of benefits which they shall receive. Many a famous and deservedly famous firm could be indicted under this head, and it is time that the strictly limited effectiveness of this system was understood.

Not unnaturally, one wishes this book had gone still further. Dr. Jaques discusses the various sources of authority in an industrial undertaking. He particularly stresses the task sanction, hitherto by far the most important, and the democratic sanction, the workers' participation in control, which he considers must be brought in to modify it. Since democracy is a cloak for so many ambiguities, the latter might perhaps better be called the human sanction. (It was, incidentally, significant that a strengthening of the human sanction in this particular factory led to a corresponding strengthening of the executive function.) But there should be further study of the nature of this task sanction, to which Western man submits himself with such a fury of obedience, and which is so indiscriminately available for the manufacture of atom bombs or cheap jewellery, the promotion of a bloody faith or the vicarage garden party. There are signs that the English, at least, are in revolt against it; the East has possibly seldom suffered from it; and this is called laziness. Perhaps it is only an unconscious insistence on the need for the human sanction which might turn the factory from the 'icy tumult', as Simone Weil called it, to a place where the worker may draw other satisfactions than his weekly pay packet.

Just Out

Henry Cecil's

new novel

NO BAIL FOR THE JUDGE

12s. 6d.

Mr. Cecil's last book, *The Painswick Line*, was (according to critics for once unanimous) ingenious, witty and entertaining. His new one is well up to standard. The story tells how a High Court Judge, through no fault of his own, is tried for murder; and how his daughter eventually establishes his innocence with the aid of a gentleman of exceptional ingenuity.

I Go Where I'm Sent

by

DAVID WALKER

15s.

The author of this topical book is probably one of the most widely-read foreign correspondents. It deals with his travels and experiences in various European countries, the Middle East, Korea and the Canal Zone, from the beginning of 1950 until January of this year.

CHAPMAN & HALL

CURE OF MINDS

By Montagu Slater. *Williams & Norgate.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by Stevie Smith

This is a day-to-day account of what it is like for a sane person of perception and sympathy, an accomplished writer, to stay as guest of the Staff in a lively and up-to-date lunatic asylum. Mr. Slater approaches with trepidation the sad doorway; so easily a lunatic might come, as he, saying, 'I am a guest, perfectly sane.' People must wonder sometimes what the line of division is between the sane and the insane when they are only slightly insane. Is it a point of giving way, a failure of the will? Then when should one give way—lest worse befall—and when not? Mr. Slater wanders in the doctors' mess and hears the 'shop' talk going on, 'Never be afraid of a negative transference . . .'. 'It's true statistically that Freudian treatment can't produce results.' 'Look at the Wasserman test . . .'. 'Clinical experience,' Fox said chubbily, 'is the key.' He watches the shock treatments, the bodies jerk to the charge, relax in cubicles into deep sleep; talks to the leucotomy cases, the knife has cut their care away, and with it what else? Mr. Slater does not make many generalisations, except the favoured one that 'modern' life is so dreadful people must go mad. (Was the past so sweet?) By and by one sees he has an obsession himself; it is regional. Always he speaks of 'suburban life' as if it were something clinical, and he often tells us that he comes from the North, a covered thought if ever there was one; the obsession of regionalism is worth studying. The cost of these mental hospitals nags at the reader, however engaged his sympathies, and with it goes the thought: is it best for the patient to have this retreat so pat at hand? (That thought has been used cruelly, but need not be.) Always, too, there is the feeling that the jolly doctors are being tossed in a wide sea of excitement and experiment, not knowing quite that the waters are sinister. But it was a good way to map the sad subject, in this rather mad daily note-taking, and the comment is modest. One thinks at the end he is well out of it all the same.

SOIL AND CIVILIZATION

by Edward Hyams. *Thames & Hudson.* 21s.

Reviewed by John Stewart Collis

This book belongs to what we may call the New History. Up till quite recently history has meant the story of man in relation to man. There has been plenty of scope here in dealing with the growth and clash of nations, the lives of individuals, the unfolding of revolutions or the decline of Empires. There is not much ground left uncovered. But now historians look round and observe a new thing, something that hitherto had not forced itself upon the attention of mankind. They observe that man eats the earth.

Put in this simple manner, even the modern reader may not believe it. But the fact is that *no other living creature* eats or ever has eaten the earth. They eat themselves and return themselves to the earth (man neither returning himself nor his waste product to the earth): and those that are herbivorous only graze off the top portion of plants. For a very long time man was a hunter, but the day came when he invented agriculture. Agriculture means that man uses the top of the earth's soil; he virtually eats it, since, in order to make it grow things for him, he *uses it up*. A long time must pass before it becomes apparent that it is being used up, but this generation has become aware of the fact. Hence the new historians (who must also be ecologists) now write of man in relation to the soil, and how dust has blown, floods risen, deserts spread, and empires declined because the top-soil has been over-worked.

The above is an attempt to give a view, rather than a review, of Mr. Hyams's book. It seems to me the most elaborate effort of this sort yet made. This subject may not be talked about by politicians, but it is *the* problem of modern man. Here is the most complete and learned statement yet made. The author first defines what is meant by Man and Soil and the Soil Community; then shows how man became a Parasite on the Soil, and Man as a Disease of Soils. But he ends with Man as a Soil Maker—for we are not obliged to cut the ground from under our feet if we approach the task of soil preservation in a scientific *and* religious spirit.

By the author of the celebrated
CHRIST STOPPED AT EBOLI

THE WATCH

by CARLO LEVI

The action of Carlo Levi's new work is contained in three days, the setting is Rome after the Liberation. The *Times Literary Supplement*, reviewing the original Italian edition, said of it:

'*L'Orologio*, though more diffuse, is not inferior to Carlo Levi's earlier book, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli.* The same fine imagination is at work. The reader remembers a flock of sheep at dawn, flooding the Roman streets and over-flowing the pavements; the animated stalls of the black market dispersed in a flash by the cry "Piove! piove!" warning of the police; the scrap-shop owner gliding like a lizard down the pathless labyrinth of his precious chains and bicycle fragments; the dazed woman giving suck to a snake in the frightful slum-suburb where rats swarmed among the refuse of the courtyard; and the porter's tale of the rich American eccentric who used to keep his horses in the courtyard of a famous palace, and once rode up the shallow grand staircase with a bag of snakes, which he released in the top flat among his horrified family. Best of all is the folk-lore of S. Antonio, told by a Calabrian peasant during a perilous night journey to Naples in a hired car which did not quite escape the gunfire of brigands.'

300 pages Lge Crn 8vo, 15/- net

JUST PUBLISHED BY
CASSELL

VICTORIAN OLYMPUS

By William Gaunt. *Jonathan Cape.* 15s.

Reviewed by P. M. Fitzgerald

With this study of Leighton, Alma Tadema and the Victorian classical painters, William Gaunt continues the study of English nineteenth-century art which he began with *The Pre-Raphaelite Movement* and *The Aesthetic Movement.* Like those two books, *Victorian Olympus* is well organised but curiously unsympathetic, with an undercurrent even of distaste. Mr. Gaunt has almost entirely resisted the temptation to be funny about his subjects or even to enlarge very much on the tiled Oriental, baronial or Grecian palaces which they built out of their amazing earnings and which are described and photographed in the *Illustrated Interviews* of the old *Strands.* Every credit should be given to him for this, and for his brilliant marshalling of the story from the arrival of the Elgin marbles in this country through the golden period of the Royal Academy under Leighton to the final twilight. (A serious omission on the 'Oriental' side is the influence of Dalziel's *Arabian Nights* and particularly the contributions by Houghton.) But he devotes one chapter only to the most troubling question of all—why had the Victorian painters such an enviable success, and why did this 'idyllic chapter in the history of patronage' produce so many pictures which we today consider of small account? Like Professor Pevsner in his study of the Crystal Palace exhibits, Mr. Gaunt skims over this question much too rapidly. In saying that 'the wealthy middle class wished to enjoy a world alternative to that which it knew' (he might have said a world it already knew in fancy dress), Mr. Gaunt only describes all wealthy middle classes, except, perhaps, the patrons of Vermeer. Doubtful, too, is the contrast drawn between the French and English buying public, as last year's exhibition *Autour de 1900* proved. Again, the moral or 'improving' side of Olympian painting and the story 'which the spectator must reconstruct' are just as applicable to the pictures of, say, Carpaccio. Other periods, and periods of great European art, have had vulgar patrons and pictures with a story, a moral, and a good likeness. Mr. Gaunt does not tackle the mystery of why, in the late Victorian period, the combination was so disastrous. The clue to the golden artist princes of the '70s and '80s is missing and the book therefore does not seem quite satisfactory, or, in Mr. Gaunt's own words, 'further analysis is needed.'

MUSICAL TRENDS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

By Norman Demuth. *Rockliff.* 35s.

Reviewed by Humphrey Searle

The idea of this book is excellent—to give a general survey of contemporary musical trends in a number of countries—and the volume itself is handsomely produced and embellished with photographs and musical illustrations. A good deal in it is extremely valuable, particularly the survey of French music in the first half of this century; here Mr. Demuth writes with authority. He is also sensible about Schoenberg, who, as he rightly states, was not responsible for, and indeed was very antagonistic to, the doctrinaire extremism of many of his followers; and it is useful to have some up-to-date information about the younger composers in Holland, Belgium and France, many of whom are only names (if that) to the average music-lover here. But the book also contains two serious faults; in the first place, the thought is often incoherently expressed and there are a number of inaccuracies. The second fault—a more understandable one—is that of omission; the preface justifiably states that the book 'does not set out to include every name and every work which has come to light since the beginning of the century in every country', but this hardly excuses the fact that such important innovators as Busoni and Janáček are dismissed with a bare reference, while Szymanowski is not mentioned at all. Again, though English music is fully and fairly treated on the whole, there is no mention of the name of Bernard van Dieren, whose music and personality had a very strong influence on the younger English composers in the 1920's. An even more curious omission is the deliberate absence of discussion of all music by Soviet composers; the reason given for this is that since a Soviet spokesman 'categorically

states that we do not like the Soviet music, it would be too destructive to write about it.' A book of this kind, which is presumably intended to act as a work of reference, should really not be side-tracked by political issues; all musicians would admit that Prokofieff and Shostakovitch, at any rate, have written a great deal of music which has justifiably achieved international recognition. The book is well worth reading for the information it does contain, though unfortunately it is not a complete survey of contemporary music. There is indeed an urgent need at this moment for such a survey, now that the main revolutionary tendencies of the first half of the century have begun to 'settle down'.

THE ROAD TO SINODUN:
A WINTER AND SUMMER MONODRAMA

Poems by George D. Painter. *Rupert Hart-Davis.* 6s.

Reviewed by Robert Gittings

A book of poems, just as much as a play, should have unity; collections of short poems, in the modern fashion, are often so many scrapings. Mr. Painter is refreshingly old-fashioned in this respect; his poems are not flawless, but they are whole. They have the dramatic unity of that mood of 'continuous excitement' which Housman experienced, the sweep of another monodrama, *Maud*, Tennyson's 'Little Hamlet'. This is Mr. Painter's:

I play the Hamlet with these fools,
And now our play is near its end,
Ophelia mad, her father dead,
Traitors arrived from foreign schools.
I'll fight a duel with my friend,
Their plots and mine will both succeed.

This opening stanza of his sequence shows that, though Mr. Painter has earlier affinities, he has a strikingly new and interesting voice. His Berkshire Lad, the hero-villain-self, with his fiend-mistresses and demon-double, contemplates not a war of scarlet and fife, but the red-sky fires of 1940–1, in which souls as well as cities burned. He is a child of our time, yet he has fought his way beyond it into something universal.

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THE ROAD TO THE CITY By Natalia Ginzburg. *Hogarth Press.* 8s. 6d.

Reviewed by Stevie Smith

A fine full picture of the American Soul by one of America's most generous soul-painters is *Chosen Country* told mostly in the Reminiscent Imperfect . . . 'Kathryn sometimes fancied she herself could remember the wounded men brought into their cave at Vicksburg during the siege, but she couldn't have because even at Vicksberg she was but a babe in arms. It must have been dear Mama who told her . . .' MR. DOS PASSOS knows how to master the dangers of this tense and when to 'fork in' for accent the saving dialogue, the harsh word, violence and sex. Jay Pignatelli is the hero, bearing the palm narrowly in a full field. His father came to America long ago. There he married and there he loved another lady, Jay's mother, who died when Jay was a boy. Jay, the child, is at school for a time in England and we hear of the haughty Etonian who shows him round and of the 'lackeyed silences' of the East End. In England he feels American, in America English, but back home he is soon sucked into the national life. One of the many other persons is Elliot who marries Miss Charity Wedgwood 'a young lady from a great English family', with strong liberal feelings. She thinks her husband, temporarily at the American School at Rome, should not send the Mirandola friezes to America. How he does reads briskly, and his retort, 'Well, you've got the Elgin marbles' is in the best tradition of Anglo-American yap and counter-yap. There are excellent passages about the war (1914–18) and about the different national ways of looking at politics and history, and when one has got to the end of it all, one sees that the vigorous odd little streams one has fallen upon cutting through the sporting undergrowth do, all of them, run into the main stream, making a mighty river of people, opinions and sentiment.

There cannot be a greater American contrast than Dos Passos and LOUIS AUCHINCLOSS, the author of *Sybil.* Dos Passos is hungry and eats everything he sees; Mr. Auchincloss is faddy, he is an American writer in the Henry James-Edith Wharton line. Sybil is a rich moody American girl of family, strictly brought up to make a suitable American dynastic marriage. To read Mr. Auchincloss on the rich well-bred life of America is like reading a caricature of English social life as it was when there was money; with a more open wit, and the religious accent, it might be our own Maurice Baring. One of the differences is that the American high-life men are mostly business men, while in the English books they are the governing classes in the narrower sense that they do govern; from the outside the American situation looks like a feminine power-grab with the women keeping the men 'up to it'. Sybil, in spite of her upbringing, is a gruff girl, and when she first meets Philip's family, the even richer Hilliards, she is offended and goes home. But she marries Philip and is so exemplary and docile it gets on his nerves. Only when Philip is found out having an affair with the bad-tempered Julia does she show the old strong feelings he loved her for. She takes Philip back, then finds she detests him, then again gives in. Why? Is she meant now to be the picture of a delicate, deeply-wounded inside and

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JOHN MURRAY

broken lady, a zombie 'carrying on' in the sergeant-major's disciplinary mood? But it is the whole picture that is so fascinating of this peculiar esoteric social group. Mr. Auchincloss is a wonderfully subtle explorer of the pleasures of a really abandoned artificiality.

MRS. HICHENS has a religious problem which she copes with very well in a reluctant way. Her heroine, Elizabeth, has to decide whether or not to marry Michael Blake, an officer in the Brigade of Guards and a Roman Catholic. Elizabeth is Church of England, but not very strict or practising. But when she sees the priest about the difficulties of a mixed marriage and listens to his instructions, at first quietly and then with dislike and affront, she realises she can never become a Catholic. 'I never thought you would', says the priest, as he takes back the declaration, unsigned, about the children and so on. She begins to love more strongly her own church, which she sees now as strong though ambiguous, and as coming not from Henry VIII but from God working through Henry, and let not the priest say 'an odd instrument to work through' because not all the 'odd instruments' were among the heretics (he does not). There are other things in the book besides religion. Upper-class family life is well and truly drawn; Elizabeth's mother farms her estates and hates popery; the younger sister is a lazy charming creature. There is also the high-class girl's finishing school where Elizabeth works. The Headmistress is of infinite gullibility in the matter of 'faiths'—one of them, Communist-sponsored, threatens trouble. Michael's soldierly and humourless loyalties are treated with sympathy; even he thinks it was funny when the instructor at his O.C.T.U. in his farewell talk said: 'Oh, and by the way, one thing I forgot to say—I'm sure you know about it already, but just in case— . . . don't wear pink out hunting when the Court's in mourning.'

MR. ATIYAH'S problem is also one of mixed marriages, but this time it is racial as well as religious. He is himself of Arab parentage, married to an Englishwoman. In this novel he writes about two highly intelligent English-educated Arab Africans who fall in love with English girls while they are at Oxford with them. Mahmoud is a very charming person but he is disgusted when his father writes to him at Oxford to say that he has married him off to his cousin, the fourteen-year-old beautiful girl Badriya. This does not go well with the calm Oxford scene and the dear teasing English friends. His father, Sheikh Ahmed, a glorious hasty man, follows up his letter with a personal visit. He stays at the Savoy, bringing with him the girl, and as chaperone, Miss Jean Bannerman, a young Oxford graduate teaching in the British African colony where Ahmed has his possessions. Mahmoud is so torn by the problems and by Badriya's beauty that he gets an *aegrotat* in his finals. He decides he will ratify the marriage, but back in Africa again, Badriya hankers after the harem way of life, the scented hair oil, the laziness and the submission. When their baby daughter dies as the result of a pre-Arab surgical rite (septicaemia sets in), he divorces her. The high colonial officer, a man of liberal opinions, wishes well to the marriage of Mahmoud's friend Amin who brings the firebrand socialist girl Betty Corfield (well-born, 'of course') home to Africa. The colonial reaction is fairly and amusingly told. Some of the English, like 'Lady Jupiter', look sideways; others make friends. Among the Arabs, some are proud of the 'English marriage', some make nationalistic objections. But there is laughter at the Arab Club when it has to be admitted that Betty is far more 'anti-British' than even the fiery editor. This book is not a work of art but it is very sage and good-tempered. The author is a man of large feelings writing with authority of what he knows.

MRS. NAOMI MITCHISON has written brilliantly of passed times, bringing life to ancient situations of pain and strife. She is particularly fond of dwelling upon the plight of innocence exposed to the forces of evil, whether it is an innocent Spartan boy in the hands of a revolting Satrap of decadent tastes, or a brave socialist girl setting off with the pram at a rush on the

Banbury Road pursued by counter-revolutionaries. She took a middle course (in time) with *The Blood of the Martyrs*, but the accent was the same—innocence in torment, victory through death. This *sed victa Catoni* tendency in her writing is not so apparent in this tale of a Scottish village in the throes of whether to build a new hall or not, how to deal with the Highland Panel's recommendations and —if they are on the side of the angels— how to defeat the black ones of the Kirk and the Conservative Party. There, underneath all the same, is the theme, right-mindedness in distress (if not exactly innocence), lightly covered with a dusting of Scottish humour and language. She is very good with these language rhythms and in a haphazard way happily going on about cows in calf, the tender skill of milking, young girls running after young men, a laird of character and a retired woman doctor, she succeeds in giving a complete picture of life as it is lived in those parts. Her own political feelings are conveyed through the youthful and thoughtful chatter of the characters, and she makes so bold as to introduce a lady called 'Mrs. Mitchison', who is described as a sagacious and hard-hitting member of the Highland Panel and a writer. This is dangerous.

The Italy MISS GINZBURG writes of is by no means that warm South of tradition so frequently used as a convenient stick to beat our Northern foibles. It is remarkable how often she mentions the cold and the rain and men walking about in raincoats and mufflers and girls scorching their legs in front of the kitchen fire. There are two long stories in the book. The first is about a young girl of a poor country family who has no human feelings of love, affection and pity; she likes to lie in bed, sees in her mother a person merely to tidy up and provide, does not care how sad her father is. She throws herself into a love situation with the local doctor's son, as a result of which she becomes pregnant. There is a boy called Nino, of superior nature, living in the family and with him she appears to be on the point of developing a true affection, but her lover, the doctor's son, is forced to marry her and Nino takes to

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drink and dies of pneumonia. The story gives a fine feeling of the awkwardness of truly pleasing oneself on a short-term view. The second story, which appears at first to be about the same girl—self-indulgent and heartless—soon diverges, for this girl, married to the evasive and unhappy Alberto who is still wrapped up in an unsatisfactory relationship with another woman, soon has a baby and she develops a very strong feeling for this baby which is also slightly morbid. The author has a splendid sense of stress and economy—'"More," said the baby, with a wily and melancholy smile.' The baby falls ill at St. Remo where the holiday people sit on deck chairs and 'tucked plaid blankets round their legs'. She dies of meningitis. The sadness of these two stories, so truthfully and poetically rendered, seems Germanic of the Weimar period rather than Italian, and the American idiom into which the book is translated adds a further flavour of international piquancy. Whatever Miss Ginzburg's own nationality may be, she has gifts.

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NO BAIL FOR THE JUDGE

By Henry Cecil. *Chapman & Hall.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by Cyril Hare

The respectable member of society plunged by the machinations of circumstance into a position of embarrassment and ridicule has been a favourite figure of comedy since the days of Pinero, if not before. The acquittal at the Old Bailey of the prisoner unjustly accused of murder through the last minute production of fresh evidence is a familiar event to the reader of thrillers. Mr. Cecil, who exploited the first theme with great success in his earlier novel *The Painswick Line*, here combines it with the second, the victim of his disrespectful imagination being once more a High Court Judge. The effect is refreshingly unusual, because the treatment of a plot which should by rights belong to the class of 'shockers' is throughout comedic. The reader is never in any serious doubt that the august prisoner's innocence will be vindicated, so that the element of suspense is wholly lacking. The interest throughout lies in the diverse (and diverting) means by which the acquittal is secured, and it is typical of the author's light-hearted way with things that the evidence which enables justice to be done at last should be in fact perjured.

Mr. Cecil has a disconcerting flair for low company. While his few respectable characters are lay figures, the prostitutes and their protectors who play a large part in the background of the story are alarmingly real. More attention to them and fewer irrelevant digressions could have made a good book better.

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